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THE NEW REPUBLIC

A deal with Fidel?

A firsthand account of some curious negotiations

By LUIS BURSTIN

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CORRESPONDENCE

DEVASTATED PEOPLES

To the editors:

In Geoffrey Wheatcroft's otherwise excellent "The Anguish of Africa" (TNR, January 9 & 16), there is one statement that should not go unchallenged: "Of all the parts of the world that had suffered from being judged on Eurocentric terms, Africa had suffered most." He goes on to mention India, China, and Arabia as regions which fared somewhat better than Africa. He fails to mention two regions which arguably fared worse.

Both North America and Australia have indigenous populations whose ancestors were devastated precisely because they were "judged on Eurocentric terms." At least tropical Africa never suffered from the European self-delusion that the original inhabitants were nonexistent, which was precisely the European attitude toward North America and Australia under the "discovery" doctrine. This invisibility of Native Americans and Aboriginal Australians continues in the present mythology of the European invaders of those continents. Such passing references as Wheatcroft's to Africa, India, China, and Arabia perpetuate the myth through their silence.

GARY FORRESTER
Portland, Oregon

DEFENDING JACKSON

To the editors:

Granted, Jesse Jackson's foray to Syria raises questions about the propriety of private diplomacy ("Jesse's Stunt," TNR, January 23). And granted, both candidate Jackson and President Assad were motivated by self-interest, not humanitarianism.

But is Jackson's embrace of Assad really the most "unbecoming display of cravenness to cruelty . . . since the pilgrimages of Western capitalists to Hitler and of Western intellectuals to Stalin"? Might not a better analogy be to George Bush's pilgrimage to Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos, in which he told Marcos, "We love your democratic principles"? TNR of late has had a funny susceptibility to ad hominem attacks whenever Israel is involved, and an odd, hateful obsession with Jackson—the main strike against whom should be that he has no government experience. TNR's resort to venom is almost as dismaying as its steady rightward drift. One hopes both trends will cease.

PAUL A. ENGELMAYER
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

THE 'JULIA' QUESTION

To the editors:

I am extremely puzzled by your excited comments (Notebook, TNR, January 23) about my inability to care whether Muriel Gardiner was or wasn't the original of Lillian Hellman's character "Julia," in her book *Pentimento*. I don't see how Muriel Gardiner's heroic achievement can in any way be diminished if another writer uses it as a *donné*; nor does Muriel Gardiner herself feel that it has been diminished. In her introduction to her book *Code Name Mary: Memoirs of an American Woman in the Austrian Underground*, Gardiner merely reports that after the publication of Hellman's book many friends and acquaintances pointed out to her the similarities between herself and "Julia," which caused her to inquire of the director of the Documentation Archives of the Austrian Resistance whether another American woman had been involved in underground work, and to learn that there had been no one but herself. Gardiner presents these facts as a kind of curiosity, hardly as an accusation. The "controversy" about whether Hellman was or wasn't telling the truth when she denied that "Mary" was the original of "Julia" clearly has no bearing whatever on Muriel Gardiner's heroism or probity. Rather, it is an extension of an amusing but surely somewhat pointless literary dispute between Mary McCarthy and Lillian Hellman, now in litigation.

JANET MALCOLM
New York, New York

INTEREST RATE THEORIES

To the editors:

Michael Kinsley writes that Jack Kemp was "stupid or dishonest" when he reported that "there is still no convincing evidence that deficits raise either inflation or interest rates" ("Liberals and Deficits," TNR, December 31). But Kemp's statement remains an unanswered challenge about the *facts*, not about some journalist's primitive theories about the "price of money" or "the market for capital" (where Kinsley says "the budget plays a surprisingly small role").

The alleged link between deficits and interest rates has been studied by top economists at the I.M.F. and at the Federal Reserve Banks of San Francisco, Atlanta, Boston, St. Louis, and Kansas City. It has been studied at Martin Feldstein's National Bureau of Economic Research, and by the staffs of the Council of Economic Advisors and the Treasury Department. It has been studied by academic economists such as Paul Evans at Stanford, Charles Plossner at Rochester, and Robert Barro at Chicago.

The result? There is still no evidence—convincing or otherwise—that budget deficits increase interest rates or inflation. Indeed, all serious public finance specialists would surely agree with the best "liberal" economists, like Robert Eisner and Wilhelm Buiter, that the familiar accounting measure of nominal "budget deficits" is not a meaningful number. It is sad to see TNR join the old fogies.

ALAN REYNOLDS
Morristown, New Jersey

Mr. Kinsley replies:

The experts Mr. Reynolds cites are parties to a dispute between professional economists that is, to be honest, over my head. A layman can, however, say three things. First, there are experts on the other side of the question, too. Second, studies showing that big deficits and high interest rates haven't always gone together don't prove much. We've never had deficits this big. Furthermore, no one claims that federal borrowing is the *only* thing that affects interest rates. Federal borrowing *is* abnormally large these days, whatever problem "serious public finance specialists" have with "the familiar accounting measure." The question is: does this make interest rates higher than they otherwise would be? Third, maybe I'm dense, but no supply-sider has yet explained, in words I can understand, how the answer to this question can possibly be "no." The supply of credit stays the same; the demand goes up. *Nu?* Or do "all serious public finance specialists" now regard the law of supply and demand as "some journalist's primitive theories"?

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FROM WASHINGTON

HOT AND SOUR COOLIES

The best Chinese restaurant in Washington is directly below my office. Sichuan Garden, as it's called, is a joint enterprise of two Chinese-American businessmen and the "Food Technical Service" of the Chinese province of Sichuan. The businessmen supply the capital and management; the Sichuan government supplies seventeen chefs and other authentic Chinese ingredients, such as spices and vinegars. The profits are split 50-50. This enterprise has been a roaring success since it opened fourteen months ago, in part because of the delicious (and expensive) food, but also because of the cachet of its official Chinese connection. *The New York Times* called it "Washington's newest sensation." It attracts a stream of celebrities and big shots. Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger and Labor Secretary Ray Donovan are among the regulars. It is a symbol of official Washington's current love affair with China.

These sophisticated diners don't seem to care that the exotic authenticity of Sichuan Garden extends to the treatment of the chefs. "As is the custom in mainland China," chirps one of many feature articles about the restaurant, "none of these culinary wizards . . . receive a salary from the restaurant. Instead, their wages are sent directly to a state-run food-service 'unit' which eventually distributes a portion of the money to the workers and their families." How quaint!

Of course they don't really need a bourgeois trifle like money, since they don't really live in America, except geographically. They're in the restaurant from 11 A.M. to 10:45 P.M., five and a half days a week (with a two-hour afternoon break, which they generally spend napping under tablecloths on the floor). All seventeen are lodged together in a house near the restaurant, under the supervision of the Chinese-American restaurant manager, Michael Hung, who lives there too. They speak no English, and their families are all back in Sichuan.

"I'm like a father and mother to them," Mr. Hung explains. "There are a lot of internal rules." For example, "they shouldn't go out all by themselves" and "they can't get involved in political activities," and "they can't hang out in bars after work or get involved in relations with foreign ladies." They can go to a movie, but he goes first to check it out. Mr. Hung says that the Chinese Embassy "gives me advice" on supervising the chefs. "We must be aware of political asylum," he says frankly. "That's why I keep them together." By the terms of their three-year contracts, and their U. S. visas, the chefs can be sent home if they disobey the rules.

In short, along with authentic Chinese vinegar and spices, Washington seems to have imported a small shipment of authentic Chinese totalitarianism. Is this too harsh? After all, Sichuan Garden is not exactly a stir-fry gulag. There's no reason to suppose these chefs are dragooned here. Their salaries of $210 a month are three times what they'd get back home in Sichuan, and Mr. Hung claims to supplement this with spending money of up to $260 a month if they work hard. They also get medical insurance, housing, and a free visit home at some point. Depending on how you figure, they're making more than the U.S. minimum wage. According to Germaine Swanson, Washington's leading oriental food entrepreneur, a good American-Chinese chef is worth more like $2,500 a month. But then these guys aren't Americans, are they?

Nevertheless, the whiff of totalitarianism seems genuine to me. These chefs, over here earning hard currency for China, are being kept isolated to minimize the risk of political or cultural infection. They are herded and watched to prevent them from misbehaving or, worse, defecting. It's that old fortune cookie joke—"Help! I'm a prisoner in a Chinese bakery"—come to life. And it's no answer to say that, through timidity or long-ingrained habit, they may prefer it this way. That, after all, is how totalitarianism works.

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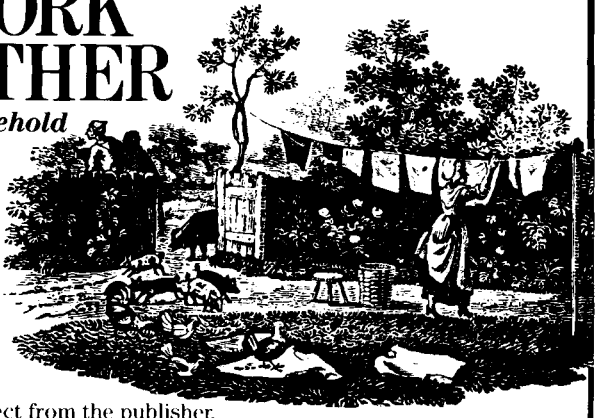

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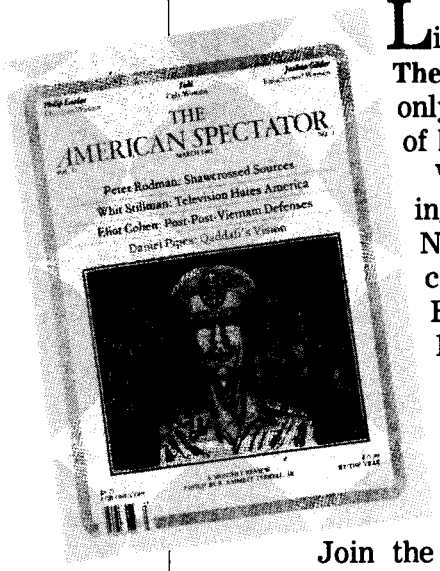

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THE NEW REPUBLIC
FEBRUARY 13, 1984

DO RUN RON

Right up to the week of his announcement there has been doubt in some quarters about whether President Reagan will seek a second term. He has received some friendly advice on *The New York Times* Op-Ed page not to do so, and from *The Economist* of London to think hard before doing so. Those predicting he wouldn't run and those advising that he shouldn't have used essentially the same arguments—that he would be better advised to quit while he's ahead, and that the problems of the next four years are likely to be sufficient to wreck his reputation as a successful President. Our hunch, though, is that Mr. Reagan is the sort who believes enough in himself and in what he is doing to want to see it through. We are writing in advance of Mr. Reagan's January 29 announcement about his candidacy in the belief that it will be what he has been signaling for months it would be. And that's fine with us. Welcome to the fray, Mr. President. We think you—and not some apologist or substitute—should be held responsible for your policies and for the dismal prospects they pose for the nation and the world over the next four years. We are certainly not endorsing anyone for President just yet, but we do hope that the Democrats will frame a case against Mr. Reagan—and offer alternatives of their own—that will make it possible for the country to avoid four more years of Reaganism.

The President has been enjoying himself lately, basking in the glow of record-high post-Eisenhower poll ratings, denouncing doubters of his economic program, asserting that he has restored America to international strength, and claiming that "there is a new feeling on the part of the American people . . . a belief in themselves and their country" as a result of his Presidency. We don't deny the man's communicative skills, and we don't begrudge him credit for boosting the morale of a large portion of the public. But Mr. Reagan's ability to infect others with his illusions—and his luck—are ephemeral instruments on which to rely in a world of hard realities.

One reality is that America exists in a world of increased economic competition requiring increased savings, investment, and ability to export. Yet Mr. Reagan has put America on a binge of consumption and borrowing that may be permanently disabling. Another reality is that America's postwar military superiority is lost forever and cannot be regained at any price, and that this country will therefore have to rely on strategy, politics, and persuasion to protect and expand freedom. Mr. Reagan has supplied only military spending, rhetoric, and the threat of force. Furthermore America cannot be a great country with its people pitted against one another in economic and social struggle. The Reagan Administration has increased the ranks of the poor and has encouraged others to be callous and uncaring toward them.

On economics, Mr. Reagan pictures himself as the conqueror of double-digit inflation, the author of prosperity, the defier of doomsayers. On the Saturday preceding the State of the Union address, he said on the radio that "when our economic program first began in late 1981, many of the doom criers had warned it would push inflation and interest rates through the roof. It hasn't quite worked out that way. We inherited 12.4 percent inflation. Today it's 3.2 percent. And the prime interest rate has dropped from over 21 percent to 11 percent.

"Last year," he continued, "those pessimists were back again. They told us bad times would go on and on and on. . . . These predictions just aren't panning out. Far from being weak, this recovery has been one of the strongest since the 1960s. . . . America is moving forward, getting stronger and confounding everyone who said it can't be done. Well, like the Little Engine That Could, it is being done."

According to the President, the latest version of naysaying holds that the recovery can't last. "Government deficits we're told, will kill the recovery by draining capital needed by business to keep the economy expanding.

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Well, I happen to believe those who underestimated the strength of this recovery may be wrong about the size of future deficits, too." He went on to acknowledge that "the deficits do matter," but he claimed for the umpteenth time that "we don't face large deficits because you're not taxed enough, [but] because government spends too much."

No doubt we will be hearing a good deal of this line of reasoning all through the 1984 campaign, but it is a fabrication, an illusion believed in only by the President and a few (a very few) of his fellow dreamy-eyed ideologues. The truth is that supply-side economics does not exist as any new theory and that Reaganomics really is a gluing-together of three old-fashioned economic nostrums, to be followed by a fourth if Mr. Reagan is reelected. The first was traditional conservative monetary restraint, which caused the 1982 recession (an occurrence the President has totally forgotten) and is responsible for reduced inflation. This policy was abandoned by the Federal Reserve out of fear of a depression. The second was traditional conservative Republican trickle-down economics in the form of tax cuts skewed toward the rich. This is a permanent feature of the Reagan economic program. The third part of Reaganomics is a massive dose of old-fashioned deficit spending calculated to jar the economic indicators into moving in the right direction during the electoral season.

THE DEFICITS that Mr. Reagan has run up presumably will be one of the major issues of this campaign. Republicans denounced President Carter for producing deficits of $60 billion and $57 billion in two years of recession induced by the raising of OPEC's prices. President Reagan's deficits in his first two years in office were $110 billion and $195 billion. This year's will be in the $185 billion range and the President's new fiscal year 1985 budget anticipates $180 billion deficits after that until fiscal 1989, when the figure descends to $130 billion on account of accelerated increases in Social Security taxes. The economic assumptions underlying these deficit projections are as breathtakingly optimistic as the deficits are terrifying (see "Figure Skirting," by Tina Rosenberg, page 11). The President is anticipating growth rates of 4 percent or better for five successive years. Among his other ambitions, the President plans to repeal the business cycle.

Obviously things aren't going to happen as Mr. Reagan's offically published work of fiction anticipates, though it is not clear which of several real-life consequences will ensue. One plausible scenario is that real interest rates—already almost as high as when the President came to office—will go higher still, cut off recovery, and induce recession. Or the Federal Reserve will become alarmed at the interest rate level and print more money, causing a rise in inflation. Or the American political and economic establishment will do the responsible thing and deal with the deficits.

Mr. Reagan, for his part, is ready with more fiction. His speeches resort to a fourth old-fashioned economic nostrum—traditional Republican cuts in domestic spending—as the way out of the deficit crisis. Needless to say, he does not speak of slashing popular middle-class programs such as Medicare and Social Security. The record so far indicates that he would again try to impose the biggest cuts in programs benefiting the least politically powerful group in society, the poor. But again reality intervenes. Significant deficit reductions cannot be made by further cutbacks in poor people's programs. Some reductions can be gained from defense cuts. But if responsible remedies are found—in the form either of tax increases or of cuts in Medicare and Social Security—they will be painful to the bulk of voters. Mr. Reagan hopes to get through the campaign without addressing this reality and leaving it to the Democrats to be the party of bad news. He produced these deficits, however, with his tax cuts and defense increases, and should be forced to say how he will deal with them. If they are not dealt with, the country's temporarily recovering economy—indeed, the world economy—faces contraction or collapse.

On another domestic front, it's obvious that there are sharp limits to Mr. Reagan's dedication to civil rights and civil liberties, and we fear the worst in both fields in a second Reagan term. The President and the outgoing Attorney General, William French Smith, have essentially shut off the switch on enforcement of laws designed to protect minorities from discrimination in jobs, education, and voting. Attorney General-designate Edwin Meese is unlikely to turn it back on. And Mr. Meese, a former law enforcement official, is likely to be even more aggressive than his predecessor in seeking to control government information and ensure government victories in criminal cases.

In terms of foreign policy, too, there is reason to fear that a second Reagan term could bring disaster—in the form of hot war in Central America or the Middle East, cold war between the United States and the Soviet Union, and the deterioration of the Atlantic alliance. We do not dispute that America needed a more forceful foreign policy than it had during the early years of the Carter Administration, but a strong policy actually was being implemented by the time Mr. Carter left office, including increases in defense spending, the grain embargo against the Soviet Union, and military aid to El Salvador conditioned on human rights improvements. The Reagan Administration has relied almost entirely on military spending, force, and noise as its instruments of foreign policy, and it has little in the way of concrete accomplishments to show for it: no arms control treaties, no movement toward Middle East peace, no improvement in southern Africa, a more dangerous situation in Central America. It's true that Grenada is no longer in the grip of Marxist-Leninists and that Mr. Reagan defeated Yuri Andropov in their political duel over deployment of Pershing II missiles in Europe. But these will count for little if the United States backs out of Lebanon in humilitating circumstances and if East-West tensions worsen, causing Europe to look increasingly inward.

What troubles Europeans and many Americans—us in-

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cluded—above all is the possibility that reelection will liberate "the *real* Ronald Reagan" from moderating political constraints and set him loose on the world. We do not believe the real Mr. Reagan is a warmonger lusting for a chance to zap the Soviets or their surrogates in combat. But he is sufficiently committed to believing the worst about the Soviets that he might easily pass up a valid arms treaty with them. After all, he did so with SALT II. He might well forgo an offer by Nicaragua to make peace with its neighbors, either out of disbelief in the sincerity of the Sandinistas or out of loyalty to anti-Communist "freedom fighters" who had risked their lives. A Nicaraguan attack on Honduras or the collapse of El Salvador might well lead to intervention by American forces. And in the Middle East, Mr. Reagan's failure to thwart Syrian aims in Lebanon could induce President Hafez Assad to press against Jordan or Israel, producing a conflict in which a face-off between the United States and the Soviet Union was threatened. We do not believe Mr. Reagan wants any of these dire events to occur. We do worry he may not be competent enough as a foreign policy strategist to avoid them.

In spite of the failings and excesses of this first Reagan term and the potential disaster of a second, the President right now is a remarkably good bet for reelection. Presidential races tend to be referenda on the performance of the incumbent rather than choices of alternative futures, and at the moment public opinion polls indicate Mr. Reagan is supported by around 60 percent of the population. That is unusually high for a President at the three-year mark. But there are indications in the polls that he is vulnerable. The mid-January Gallup Poll shows the President tied with Walter Mondale and with John Glenn, 45 percent to 45 percent. The Democrats have an opportunity to make a convincing critique of Mr. Reagan—Mr. Reagan's record gives them that—and to put forward an alternative program that will win the confidence of the country. We wish them success.

NOTEBOOK

□ MAYOR ED KOCH of New York has come up with a creative new way to tackle teenage unemployment. On January 9, Mr. Koch unveiled a $30 million National Service Corporation for the City of New York that will put one thousand 18-year-old New Yorkers to work in city departments and nonprofit agencies. Mr. Koch says the jobs program (which he hopes will serve as a model for a national public service scheme) will teach young people the work ethic and "the spirit of altruism." He isn't kidding. Volunteers will toil at such tasks as aiding crime victims, maintaining city parks, and staffing shelters for the homeless—and they'll be paid just two-thirds of the minimum wage. Those who stick it out for a year, however, will get a check for the remaining third of their wages, or a school tuition voucher. And the corporation will provide basic literacy training to youngsters who need it. True, the Koch plan reaches only a few of New York's jobless teens; it's also only a three-year experiment. But it has three obvious virtues. It provides low-cost, energetic labor where it is plainly needed. It gives young people a genuine sense of contributing to their communities. And it creates a link between work and schooling (something that many youth jobs programs lack), which encourages participants to acquire learning they'll need in order to find future employment. All are reasons to hope that Mr. Koch's idea receives some consideration in Washington.

□ A SEVEN-PARAGRAPH Associated Press story published in the January 12 *New York Times* quoted "a spokesman for the Roman Catholic archbishop of San Salvador" as declaring that the Kissinger Commission report on Central America "erred completely" because it "excluded the possibility of dialogue" which the archbishop, Msgr. Arturo Rivera y Damas, had proposed. The A.P. story went around the world, over the air, into newspaper columns, and back out of the mouths of U.S. Senators and Representatives. Only one problem. On January 15, in his weekly homily, the archbishop announced he had not read the Kissinger report yet, and denied authorizing the A.P. report. He called it "disinformation" and said "there are people who enjoy doing this." The archbishop opposes outside military aid to the forces fighting in his country, but has been careful not to oppose U.S. aid to the government as long as Nicaragua and Cuba are supplying weapons to the Communist insurgents.

□ THE MOST MEAN-SPIRITED piece of journalism in recent weeks must be Everett G. Martin's "Will Vengeance Poison Argentina's Democracy?" (*The Wall Street Journal*, January 20). A fair question, you might say; indeed, it would not serve the cause of the new Argentine democracy to scare the Argentine military into another seizure of power. But Mr. Martin had more on his mind. Argentina, he complained, is becoming too democratic. President Raul Alfonsín "is suffering from his countrymen's penchant for overdoing," what with all these indictments against the fascists of former governments. As for the Argentines, they are exploiting their freedom from fascism to "smoke pot" and "print pornographic magazines" and see "off-color films." Is it for this that the *desaparecidos* died? Moreover, those Argentines who are "glued to their sets" for the news of unmarked graves are "wallowing in the horror." Never mind that a fearful number of them are related to those "grisly skulls." No, it is not vengeance that is taking place in Argentina. It is justice. And *The Wall Street Journal*, which made apologies for Mr. Alfonsín's predecessors, lacks the moral credentials to worry that it is anything more. If worse comes to worse, and the generals return to power, and open society is closed, there will the *Journal* be again, instructing its readers in the relative merit of authoritarianism and explaining that strategic considerations prevent us from mourning Argentina's all too brief moment in the sun.

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□ "THE TEAR OF THE YEAR" was one of Jackie Wilson's last hits. The year is still young, and so was Jackie Wilson when he died last week. He had been in and out of a coma since he collapsed on stage in 1977. Mr. Wilson was not the most famous or the most far-reaching figure in rock 'n' roll. He was, like Clyde McPhatter, like Little Willie John, merely perfect. His ease with his demotic language was everything. You did not admire his music; you loved it. And you danced. Nobody sang "Let your backbone slip" with quite Jackie Wilson's authority. He had the voice of a gospel singer, the soul of a bluesman, the feet of a dance floor demon. From "Reet Petite" in 1957, which a boxer named Berry Gordy Jr. wrote for him, to "Your Love is Lifting Me (Higher and Higher)" in 1967, which Rita Coolidge later gentrified for a new generation, Jackie Wilson produced some of the classics of black joy. His ballads were made of the kind of bombast that Phil Spector eventually perfected, that filled decades of teenagers with delusions of grandeur. (The love song he made of "Vesti la giubba" is a terrible responsibility for rock 'n' roll to bear.) But Jackie Wilson was best when he was fast. Last year CBS had the wit to reissue his records. Not a moment too soon. They remain as proof of what three minutes and some seconds of real rhythm can do to an ordinary life.

□ PERHAPS THE TOUCHIEST SUBJECT in present political discourse is the comparison between free and unfree political systems. You would have thought that the comparers would be more than a little careful. But in *The New York Review of Books*, in a review of two studies of China and the Cultural Revolution, John K. Fairbank comes to the following conclusion: "The Western faith in legally protected public individualism, currently expressed in our concern for human rights, probably appeals to the highly educated Chinese elite more than Christianity ever did. But even they for now have to put the collective national interest ahead of individual rights. As we here try to defend ourselves against the computer, we can feel we have something in common with them." Hold on. This bit about "the collective national interest" sounds like a euphemism for something terrible. Why exactly do the Chinese *have* to put law and human rights behind? And how exactly is the computer in America like the police state in China? The computer may be a cultural revolution, but it is not a Cultural Revolution. This is the kind of crude comment that the author's word processor should never have been ordered to print out.

□ TWENTY YEARS AGO IN THE NEW REPUBLIC: "His father once said that Bobby Kennedy was the child he felt most like himself. 'Bobby,' he is supposed to have said, 'hates like me.' That is not quite true; entire understanding of your children does not seem to be any criterion for the success even of parents as extraordinary as the elder Kennedys. Robert Kennedy, even in his days of partisan warfare, had an unexpected weakness for the sinner. Of course he knew how to hate; he hated on his father's behalf; he grew up to hate on his brother's. But these last weeks that he has endured have now left behind a man we recognize as having been unskilled at hating on his own. He will complete his healing; men of his size take a little longer. We think him like us, because he lives in our time; but there is something old-fashioned about the sense of duty and of family that has been the motor of a life that can hardly be put together again with any other motor. He is in fact archaic; even now, when he is immobile, the image one takes away from him is archaic, coming as it does from the epitaph the Spartans put over their three hundred dead at Thermopylae: 'Stranger, when you see the Lacedaemonians, tell them we lie here faithful to their orders.' " ("Robert F. Kennedy," by Murray Kempton, February 15, 1964.)

CROSSCURRENTS

KIDS' STUFF

THERE she goes again. Samantha Smith, writer, traveler, peacemaker, is back in the news. Fresh from her diplomatic triumphs in Moscow (which she toured at the invitation of pen pal Yuri Andropov) and Japan (where, as part of a peace festival, she took to Hiroshima a tape of *The Day After*), she is hosting a cable television show in which she interviews Democratic Presidential candidates. John Glenn and Walter Mondale have declined to appear on the show, perhaps because Samantha is eleven years old. The other candidates have accepted; they have to take their publicity where they can get it. It is all very cute, but is it curmudgeonly to ask what's going on here?

I talked to a colleague about this question and, thinking my objections were ideological, he pointed out that Samantha's original letter to Yuri Andropov asking for an end to the arms race was evenhanded, not blaming our current predicament, as some do, just on the United States. I concede that Samantha is not a Communist dupe. My question is: Who cares?

If it were just the Samantha show (a natural for *Network*), we could write it off as more silly media hype to fill in the hours between Super Bowls. It is not just Samantha. We seem to have taken an inordinate interest in what kids, as a species, think about the world. Not that we shouldn't ask, or, in the past, haven't asked children what they think. But we used to do it in order to find out about kids; now we do it to find out about ourselves.

Art Linkletter once made a career out of getting kids to talk. "Kids Say The Darndest Things" was a smash—and a comedy. As recently as three years ago, a President was laughed out of office for consulting his twelve-year-old daughter on questions nuclear. Today, a platoon of American psychiatrists is doing just that, and gravely issu-

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ing the "findings" of its studies. For example, kids are afraid of nuclear war, and this fear is ruining their lives. (Delinquency, depression, dope, and the other perennial problems of adolescence used to be blamed on inadequate mothering, capitalism, racism, or just plain "the system"; now it's the MX.) The most important finding, however, is that kids understand the nuclear problem and adults don't. Harvard's Dr. John Mack, a leading researcher in the field, explains: "Children and adolescents seem less defended than adults and more able to perceive the reality of what nuclear weapons can do. . . . The nuclear threat is largely the creation of human beings who cannot resolve their relationships with one another in the political realm. Our young people know this. . . ." Meaning: our old people don't. Kids have not yet learned to "deny," i.e., lie to themselves. (A dubious proposition, considering how good kids are at lying to others.) Thus they can strike with unrepressed simplicity at the heart of an issue. Unencumbered by the compromises and deceits of adulthood, they see nuclear competition for what it is—as an unresolved "relationship."

SUCH SENTIMENTALISM is not restricted to scientists of the therapeutic arts. Hollywood suffers from it too. It is hard to think of a recent film on domestic life in which the parents don't act like children and the children like adults. The parents are invariably messed up and breaking up, and the kids suffer but understand. It's the emperor's new clothes, sometimes done with delightful whimsy (*E.T.*), more often with deadly earnestness (*Shoot the Moon* and all the recent Neil Simon). But the message is the same: it's the kids, undeceived, pure of heart, and clear-eyed who know the score.

As if to confirm that the whole kid-think business has gotten out of hand comes the news that *My Weekly Reader*, a magazine for grade schoolers, is going to poll children for their opinions. Now we won't just have to rely on the White House or the Congressional Budget Office in deciding what to think about the relationship between deficits and high interest rates. We will now be able to consult the third grade.

What is going on here? A lot of weighty theories present themselves. For Spenglerians it is yet another sign of the decay of a culture so devoid of faith in itself, and in the assorted seers or gurus to which it contracted out for truth in recent years, that it has now turned to its children for wisdom.

Then there's the generational hypothesis, popular for explaining much these days: the '60s generation, perhaps the generation most cut off from children during its adolescence and young adulthood, has grown up, and produced and for the first time discovered children. Sold-out, comfortable, and guilty, it casts the noble little savages padding around in Calvin Klein Juniors as the incarnation of its old, purer self. When you're thirty-one, it is easier to say: Never trust anyone over twelve.

And for Democrats, there's the theory that the people are desperately searching for simplicity to escape the complexities of this difficult age, Ronald Reagan being perhaps the primary beneficiary of the phenomenon. At a time when the President speaks like a child, why not consult the real thing?

Let me propose a Talmudic explanation. The Talmud teaches that after the destruction of the temple, prophecy was given only to children and fools. And we have had our fling with fools. Remember R. D. Laing? For a brief time in the '60s we went for wisdom to the insane, the only people brave and bold and uninhibited enough to pierce the repressed, commercialized, corrupted, false consciousness of the age and pronounce the "undefended" truth. (Primal scream and other low-dose shortcuts to psychotic regression—and truth—were retailed for Everyman, who had to go to the office on Monday.) It was a short-lived but widespread fad that peaked with a brief celebration of suicide, surely the ultimate evidence of one's defenselessness against the truth. And then it played itself out, as it had to. In the end, people came back to the view that the insane are desperately unhappy, often end badly (Charles Manson and John Hinckley come to mind), and, in general, talk crazy. And that caused a prophet shortage, now filled by the short-pants and knee-socks set.

I prefer this theory because it suggests that as soon as we get through this silliness with kids, we'll have run out of prophets. That's a relief.

Paul Simon was recently asked what he meant when he wrote twenty years ago, "The words of the prophets are written on the subway walls." He replied that he had no idea. Things are looking up.

CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER

The federal budget numbers hoax.

FIGURE SKIRTING

WHEN President Reagan submits his 1985 budget to Congress, some of the most important numbers won't show up on the balance sheet. Administration estimates of inflation, growth, unemployment, and interest rates in budgeted years affect predictions of how much every item will cost and how much the government will raise in taxes. If the forecast of unemployment for next year is low by just one percentage point, it means a $25 billion difference in the budget deficit. If the growth estimate is off one percentage point, the difference is $10 billion.

How do we get these crucial, little-noted economic assumptions? They are the product of yearly negotiations between the heads of the Treasury Department, the Office of Management and Budget, and the Council of Economic

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Advisors. They consider not only the range of what private forecasters say, but also what they hope will happen to the economy if Congress passes the Administration budget, and the political importance of putting the budget in the best possible light. In other words, they make the numbers up. Ronald Reagan is not the only creative statistician in the government.

The popular perception is that most figures used by the government are laboriously calculated by bureaucratic number-crunchers using high-tech computer programs and sophisticated methods, and that the statistics then determine the size and shape of government programs. For many government statistics exactly the reverse is true. Instead of guiding government spending, they are created to justify positions and to sell programs to the public. In some cases, government officials first decide what they want their numbers to prove, and then work backward. But even when the political origins of statistics are known, they grow up to become the basis—unquestioned by the press or public—for public policy. We can already see this phenomenon in the 1985 budget, but nowhere was this more true—and more important—than in the origins of the first Reagan budget.

UPON taking office, President Reagan directed Murray Weidenbaum, the chairman of the C.E.A., to provide quantitative proof that the only correct answer to his famous question, "Are you better off now than you were four years ago?" was "no." This wasn't easy. True, inflation was up. But wages were up more. Unemployment was down. More people owned homes than ever before. Per capita productivity was the highest it had ever been. Needless to say, none of the positive statistics appeared in the "comprehensive audit." Instead, the C.E.A. publicized the few measures that showed what Reagan wanted.

The cooked-up statistics became the basis for Reagan's first televised address as President. On February 5, 1981, he told the country he had just received a comprehensive audit of the economy. "I regret to say we are in the worst economic mess since the Great Depression," he said. He recited a laundry list carefully edited by the C.E.A.: deficits were over $80 billion, the federal government payroll was up, there had been two years of back-to-back double-digit inflation, seven million Americans were unemployed. He pulled out a dollar bill and compared it to thirty-six cents to show how the buying power of the dollar had declined. The speech was a tour de force. Economic decline—and the need for the Administration's program—was now firmly set in the public mind.

It was not as firmly established in the minds of economists, many of whom took issue with the President's figures. A front-page *New York Times* story by Steven Rattner cited liberal economists' disagreements that the economy had declined. At a White House news conference on February 12, the President introduced Weidenbaum to defend the economic audit. Reporters went through the audit statistic by statistic, demanding to know where the numbers came from and what was left out. "The press hit Weidenbaum up one side and down another," said one C.E.A. economist who was there. "He came away from it visibly shaken."

All three networks and *The New York Times* carried reports of the news conference—sort of. The networks used the news conference as part of a package of stories on the budget. None made a reference to the charges of inaccuracy; all three merely quoted Reagan as saying that the economy was in trouble. After the jump to the second page of the story in the *Times* business section, Rattner reported that "The bulk of the briefing focused on skepticism about assertions in the 'audit' and the President's speech that Americans are worse off now than they were in 1960 and that the economy faced disaster without radical new policies." That was it.

The press's quiescence about the statistical inaccuracies is not unusual; with the exception of the obligatory story listing Reagan's errors after his press conferences, the press rarely identifies misleading statistics. Statistical analysis is not the stuff of compelling stories, especially for television, where statistics usually appear as skeletal graphics or as cutely phrased shorthand about stacked-up dollar bills reaching to Saturn. Nor does questioning statistics fit the model of objectivity that the press is supposed to uphold. Even if reporters know statistics are made up, they must present their case as Rattner did originally: "X says this but Y says this." Giving equal weight to both sides implies the difference is a matter of partisanship, not fact.

Finally, statistics are complicated, and most audiences don't understand and don't want to be bothered. Questioning numbers is seen as nit-picking. Reporters are willing to quote without comment, and people are willing to fall for the mystique of numbers.

WEIDENBAUM HAD the awkward task of brokering an economic forecast for the 1981 budget from among three groups of people, some of whom had so little regard for traditional economics that they wanted to do away with the C.E.A. entirely. There were monetarists such as Beryl Sprinkel, Undersecretary of the Treasury for Monetary Affairs, who believed economic solutions could be found by controlling the money supply. There were the supply-siders, such as Paul Craig Roberts, Assistant Secretary of the Treasury for Economic Policy, and Norman Ture, Undersecretary for Tax Policy, who believed that tax cuts would stimulate the economy to a balanced budget. And there were more traditional economists, such as Alan Greenspan, who tried to inject the forecasts with some semblance of reality.

The realists lost. The purpose of the economic forecast was not to forecast, but to sell the Reagan budget and tax cuts to Congress and the public. Among other things, the Administration decided that if Congress passed the Reagan budget, we would have 4.2 percent real growth and interest rates of 8.9 percent in 1982. In reality, we had real growth of *minus* 1.9 percent and 10.6 percent interest rates in 1982. The Administration also predicted a balanced

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budget in fiscal year 1984—a mere $200 billion off the mark.

How could the Administration get away with predictions that even without hindsight were obviously silly? Easy. Congress was eager for statistics that would justify a honeymoon with Reagan. The government's forecast gave supporters of the Administration budget license to ignore the deficits hidden by the rosy assumptions.

The Administration predictions, slightly altered, became the basis for its budget proposal. Most Democrats were pushing another budget, one that the House Budget Committee had approved, that used more realistic economic assumptions. The difference in assumptions made the Administration budget look cheaper and the committee's budget look more expensive. Some members of Congress actually argued that because the H.B.C. budget used higher estimates of interest rates, inflation, and unemployment, its supporters didn't *want* the economy to improve. In other words, accurate statistics are counterproductive.

NEXT TO JOIN the Congressional ostriches was the press. The 1981 budget battle saw few articles explaining why the Reagan numbers looked so good. Most reporters merely parroted them. Even reporter Martin Tolchin's article in *The New York Times* did not note the differences between the two budgets' assumptions, saying merely that the budget supported by the President was based on "generally optimistic assumptions." Helen Dewar of *The Washington Post*, the newspaper which we would expect to give the most attention to the minutiae of Congress, mentioned the assumptions only in the last paragraph of a long story: "The Democrats claimed that the spending totals would be roughly the same if the same assumptions were used for both proposals."

Reporters had covered the optimistic assumptions when the Administration first released its forecasts. The problem, though, is less that misleading numbers go unnoticed. It is that even when challenged they become the basis for future stories. During the budget debate, the story the press covered was Reagan's sweeping changes, not the cooked-up numbers used to justify those changes.

The mechanics of writing a newspaper story mean reporters can only include a qualifier a limited number of times. Gradually the misleading nature of the numbers recedes from view. Inaccurate assumptions then start a second career as inaccurate budget totals. By then few remember that the statistics were semi-fictional in the first place.

The Reagan budget-makers are not the only ones to use statistics selectively for political purposes. When Joseph Califano, President Carter's Health and Human Services Secretary, proposed a national health insurance plan that would go into effect in 1983, he provided cost figures in 1980 dollars, thus conveniently ignoring an inflation rate that would have added more than $9 billion to the program by the time it was to have started.

As a candidate Ronald Reagan based much of his cut-the-red-tape rhetoric on a study by Murray Weidenbaum, detailing the costs of regulation. Weidenbaum arrived at his $100 billion-plus estimate, which became gospel for conservatives and anti-regulation business leaders, by multiplying the costs of administering regulation by twenty. Why? Weidenbaum said that complying with regulations cost twenty times more than administering them, a contention with no empirical support.

Playing with statistics can make a budget balance, or a health program cost $18 billion instead of $27 billion, but the savings are a mirage. We cut bus service and redefine schoolchildren's nutritional requirements to save millions; we let billions slip through the budget while we look the other way. But the politicians who manipulate statistics care more about passing a specific program than its consequences. Proponents who know the numbers are faked will go along with the deception because it provides a convenient and painless rationale for a program. A statistic that has a successful career quickly comes to define the conventional wisdom, and opponents are left whining to an unreceptive press and public. For the art of building legislative and popular support, you don't have to know much about numbers. You just have to know what you like.

TINA ROSENBERG

Tina Rosenberg is a Washington writer.

No heat shield on the capsule.

OVER AND OUT

JOHN GLENN rehearsed for the New Hampshire debate for days with his media advisers, videotaping, reviewing, and perfecting his performance. On the stage at Dartmouth College on January 15, Senator Glenn waited patiently for the appropriate moment to attack Walter Mondale. At last the opening appeared and Glenn unloaded: "gobbledygook . . . ridiculous . . . promising everything to everybody . . . I'm disgusted." Then the Glenn campaign waited anxiously for the public to acclaim their candidate's boldness. Within twenty-four hours the *Washington Post*-ABC News poll showed that Glenn's ratings had plummeted. At 11 percent he trailed Mondale by forty points and latecomer Jesse Jackson by two. It later emerged that the poll was based on a sample of only fifty-seven people who saw the debate; its margin of error was arguably 100 percent. Nevertheless, it was an unreliable indicator confirming a reliable notion, that Glenn is auguring in for a crash. Within the campaign the mood turned from apprehension to panic.

By his own calculations, Glenn was supposed to be

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closing in on Mondale by now. In Glenn's private survey research, Mondale seems startlingly vulnerable. He is too much a politician, too closely identified with Jimmy Carter, too liberal, too uninteresting. Mondale's great organizational strength could be finessed by expert media. Glenn would concede the ground to Mondale if he could control the air. His early advertising, created by Scott Miller, the Coca-Cola ad man, and David Sawyer, the political consultant, presented the ideal Glenn (See "Statecraft as Spacecraft," TNR, November 14). Outer space, John F. Kennedy, ticker-tape parades—it was all there. Glenn was crisp, caring, and charismatic, dropping words like "new technology." But there was no lift-off.

GLENN'S ADVISERS now blame the failure of his image partly on *The Right Stuff*, the cinematic epic touted by the press and feared by Mondale. By recalling Glenn's heroism at the zenith of American optimism, it was thought, the movie would make us embrace him as the one to lead us bravely into the future. Instead, according to David Sawyer, the movie had "a basically negative effect. It looked like we were running the campaign solely on the fact that he's an astronaut." Everybody knows Glenn was a spaceman; not everybody knows that he's a Senator, and many of those who do know it tend to discount it. In the American mind he lives only on the tip of a booster rocket. The campaign attempted to solve the problem by connecting his mythology with his political career. The slick ads worked well, perhaps too well. They contrasted sharply with the candidate on the stump, who has been typically stumbling, inarticulate, and boring. The contradiction between his person and his persona had made voters hesitate to support him. And it wasn't just that he was perceived exclusively as an astronaut that gave pause. His prosaic qualities hurt him more than they would another candidate precisely because of his cosmic deed. He has seen the globe as a big blue marble, but he offers no global insight. We know he went up to heaven; we don't know what he learned there. He's the most earthbound candidate of all. He has little notion himself of how to apply his myth to his candidacy. His advertising does, but it only widens the gap.

Candidate Glenn reminds one of the old *Life* magazine's version of the space program as a mind-numbing procession of dreary apple-cheeked cadets. By contrast, the filmic John Glenn has an ironic self-consciousness. "I'm a lonely beacon of restraint in a squall of car crazies," Glenn says wryly in the movie. A good line, but it was Tom Wolfe's. The movie's producers put it in Glenn's mouth because they know that the public gags on unrelieved self-righteousness. But that was the movies. This is reality.

When Glenn's image failed to move significant numbers of voters into his column by the late fall of 1983, his handlers decided to carry the battle to the ideological plane. Mondale was on the offensive; every other day he seemed to boast a new endorsement. Glenn's frustration rose. He knew he ought to be winning. And his pollster, William Hamilton, produced numbers to support that feeling. Hamilton presented voters with two constructs, one labeled the "old party" and the other the "new party." The "old party"—the party of Walter Mondale—was traditionally liberal and wanted to reverse Reagan's policies. The "new party"—the party of John Glenn—wanted to reform Reaganism, but not to go back to the old Democratic policies; it would seek arms control but maintain a strong defense; and it would challenge interest groups on behalf of undefined "new goals." A majority of those polled favored the "new party." Bewilderingly, a majority also favored Mondale. Glenn's advisers concluded that their campaign would have to make these distinctions evident if the "new party" voters who backed Mondale were to be won over to Glenn.

In mid-November, Glenn assailed Mondale as being weak on defense, a captive of special interests, and wedded to the "failed policies of the past." Mondale counterattacked, accusing Glenn of not being a "real Democrat," a charge he underlined by pointing out Glenn's 1981 Senate vote in favor of Reagan's economic program. Glenn's campaign waited for the ratings. But rather than marking his rise, Glenn's ideological outburst provoked his precipitous decline. What happened?

Many of Glenn's supporters were young professionals, women, and liberals who hoped that he would indeed be a progressive candidate of new ideas. When he revealed himself to be an ordinary conservative Democrat, they instantly deserted him, some going over to Mondale and others swelling the ranks of the undecided. Glenn had closed the door on those most intrigued by his mythology. He locked himself into a politics-as-usual candidacy, driven by arbitrary categories created by polling. The paper "new party," Glenn's vehicle, in fact served to obfuscate his weakness. According to a private poll conducted by Patrick Caddell, Glenn's support of the B-1 bomber and nerve gas production makes 60 percent of Democratic voters nervous about his attitudes toward "defense spending and arms control." Thus his attack on Mondale for being "weak" on defense only called attention to his own liability. Instead of transcending the confines of ideology through charisma, he imprisoned himself.

THE PREMISE underlying his campaign has been "electability": Glenn's centrism would attract Republicans and allow him to triumph over Reagan. In one way this notion is rigidly linear, viewing a candidate in the middle as occupying more ground than anyone else. In another way the notion is circular: Glenn is electable because of his positions, which make him electable. But of course it is Glenn's mythology, not his ideology, which constitutes his appeal. Had he blended that mythology with more liberal positions he might very well have lured Mondale voters to his side. So far, "electability" has proved to be a restrictive rationale. It is such a thin motive for Presidential campaigns that candidates of both parties who have founded their efforts upon it have always proved precisely unelectable. (Where have you gone, George Romney? A nation turns its lonely eyes to you,

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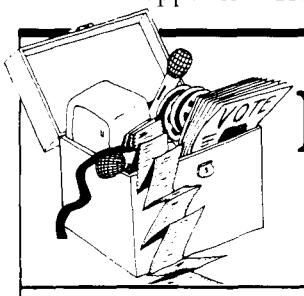
Birch Bayh.) Most voters do not think the way political consultants and columnists do; they rarely sacrifice their emotions to expedient reasoning—and those who do think this way, this year, are supporting Mondale. In addition, support for a candidate in broad polls doesn't necessarily translate into support in partisan primaries. The most motivated voters are the most issue-oriented, they are the ones who dominate party elections. Some sort of artificial "center" may be fabricated out of polling data, but finding it in actual politics is another matter.

Moreover, a collection of positions pasted together into a political profile doesn't make for an ideology. The absence of a salient or at least a salable idea at the core of the Glenn campaign distinguishes it fundamentally from the most successful unconventional Presidential campaign of recent times, that of Jimmy Carter in 1976. Carter, like Glenn, relied upon images rather than organization to win the nomination. But unlike Glenn, Carter advanced two powerful ideas: first, restoring integrity to government after Watergate, a commitment demonstrated by his religious authenticity; and second, solidifying racial and regional reconciliation, a commitment demonstrated by his being a southerner devoted to civil rights. These were genuine longings, to which Carter, above all other candidates, laid claim. In no substantive sense does Glenn's candidacy, despite its media-based character, resemble Carter's.

Glenn's ideological attack served a highly useful function for his opponent. Glenn became Reagan's surrogate, a sparring partner for Mondale. By punishing Glenn, Mondale prepares for the championship fight. Glenn's mechanical performance at the New Hampshire debate, where he reiterated the arguments he had already made and lost points on, provided another healthy workout for Mondale. Mondale needs Glenn, just as Reagan needs Mondale.

The Glenn campaign has few remaining options, and they have all been tested in controlled discussions of representative voters called "focus groups" conducted by a social psychologist. It was discovered that if people learn more nice things about Glenn's political career, they're more likely to vote for him. Conversely, if they are told nasty things about Mondale they're less likely to vote for him. There's a catch: because Glenn is perceived as an all-American hero he's not supposed to say anything nasty. Unless his positive ratings can be improved enough to give him a cushion, he risks losing it all through negative spots. This is the conundrum now preoccupying the managers of Glenn's campaign. It appears to have pushed them close to the edge.

On the one hand, there's a notion that Glenn can be reinvented. "Given the image Glenn has right now in the press, and the image Walter Mondale has," says Miller, "people are looking actively for an alternative." Who's the alternative? "We'll be presenting John Glenn as the alternative to John Glenn and Walter Mondale." According to this extraordinary formula, Glenn I is lost in space. Glenn II is on the launching pad. Miller conjectures that if



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Glenn had just begun his campaign he would be hailed as a deliverer. "Seeing Jesse Jackson made me wish Glenn had entered the race three weeks ago." Still, he believes that Glenn II can fly. "I think he can erase 'dull-and-stupid' on the air." Once the new probe is aloft, we can forget about that first one—dull-and-stupid.

On the other hand, maybe the campaign should go negative. "My instinct," says Miller, "is to take out Mondale's kneecaps. I don't want to be there on February 29 [the day after the New Hampshire primary] and find I've still got ammunition in my belt." A slew of negative ads have already been produced. I viewed these spots on a "background" basis. While I can't report precisely what's in them, I can report that they're very tough. One of them is reminiscent of the lurid segments in *The Right Stuff* about the Russian space program. It uses blurry black-and-white photos of Mondale, Lane Kirkland, and the Diplomat Hotel in Miami Beach to "expose" the alliance between Mondale and the A.F.L.-C.I.O. as if it were a scandal that had just been uncovered.

Both Glenn and Mondale have accepted the conventional wisdom that this is a two-man race. Glenn's advisers believe that voters deserting Mondale because of Glenn's negative advertising would of course turn to Glenn. "Mondale's loss is always Glenn's gain," says Miller. But if the problem is as bad as the Glenn negative spots say, then the solution must be more dramatic than Glenn.

For the moment, his status as runner-up has stabilized. But if he sinks more, the entire complexion of the contest would quickly change. Mondale would be deprived of his straw man. Glenn's demise and Jackson's emergence would create an opening for a Great White Hope. But can Gary Hart, the obvious contender, fulfill the role he has set for himself as leader of the "new generation" any more than Glenn has become leader of the "new party"?

The strategy of manufacturing Glenn II to replace Glenn I has a precedent. In Ohio Glenn A lost his 1970 bid for the Senate; he was effectively branded a lightweight, not a real Democrat. In 1974 Glenn B won the Senate race by directly challenging his opponent, establishing his credentials as a real politician. In 1984 Glenn I has been a combination of Glenns A and B. The heat shield on Glenn I, however, has burned off. In Presidential campaigns there are rarely second chances. The most righteous right stuff, one remembers, is about the glory of facing the end gracefully.

SIDNEY BLUMENTHAL

South Africa turns to terror.

NAMIBIAN NIGHTMARE

BY JAMES NORTH

IN MID-JANUARY, after the completion of South Africa's latest invasion of Angola, the army issued a characteristically self-congratulatory and misleading communiqué. Pretoria's generals claimed they had won another decisive victory over SWAPO, the guerrilla movement that is fighting for the independence of Namibia, the vast desert territory that South Africa continues to rule illegally. This claim was an eerie reprise of the boasts that followed each of its ten previous invasions of Angola. Yet somehow SWAPO continues to gain in strength.

The generals said that several thousand of their troops had driven two hundred miles deep into Angola solely to attack SWAPO bases. The communiqué stated that the army had killed between three hundred and five hundred of "the enemy," mainly SWAPO guerrillas and Angolan soldiers who fought alongside them. As usual, the press was not allowed to accompany the invasion force. There was no mention of any wounded. Apart from a single Cuban, there was no mention of any prisoners.

Similar previous communiqués aroused the suspicion of Peter Lutorf, a representative of the International Red Cross, when he visited Namibia in mid-1981. Citing one South African release, Lutorf told the press, "It simply does not happen in any battle that you have a clash with two hundred or so people in which forty-five are killed and no prisoners or wounded taken." Back then the army already claimed it had killed four thousand SWAPO guerrillas, along with another six hundred civilians who died "accidentally." But Lutorf learned that the detention camps in Namibia only held several hundred prisoners, instead of the thousands he would have expected on the basis of South Africa's official statistics. Since then, thousands more have died, and Pretoria's accounting has grown even more vague and confusing.

There is a frightening possible explanation for Pretoria's mysterious statistics, which is suggested not only by re-

James North is the pseudonym of an American writer who lived in southern Africa for five years. His book on the region will be published next fall.

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cent events, but also by the violent history of South Africa's occupation of the territory it continues to call South-West Africa. The South African Army may have abandoned the hope of ever crushing SWAPO on the battlefield. It may have decided instead to deliberately kill or drive away masses of black civilians who provide SWAPO with its base of support. Thus the lack of prisoners. No guerrilla army could survive for long in an unpopulated wasteland. Meanwhile, Pretoria diverts world attention by insisting, contrary to all evidence, that it is genuinely negotiating toward United Nations-sponsored elections that would finally bring the territory to independence. South Africa seems to have duped the Reagan Administration into condoning this deceitful and murderous policy.

THE PRESENT CRISIS dates back to the early 1970s. In 1971 the U.N. decided that Pretoria had not fulfilled its mandate, granted by the League of Nations after World War I, to guide the vast desert territory toward genuine independence; and South Africa's authority over the area was revoked. The decision represented a final legal defeat for Pretoria's efforts, through several decades of wrangling in world forums, to annex the territory.

John Vorster, then South Africa's swaggering prime minister, was at the height of his powers. He had crushed all resistance to apartheid inside both South Africa and Namibia, and his country was surrounded by an apparently strong ring of other minority regimes in Rhodesia, Angola, and Mozambique. Vorster's main concern was the continued international criticism of apartheid, which posed at least some threat to foreign economic investment in South Africa, with its critical export of advanced technology. Pretoria was most vulnerable on the issue of its occupation of Namibia, which even the more sympathetic Western governments now regarded as illegal. Vorster decided that he would try to come to terms with the United Nations. He gambled that he could install a client regime in Windhoek, the Namibian capital, that would be formally independent without challenging South Africa's economic and strategic domination. It was to be Vorster's biggest blunder.

Ten years later, everything had changed. Young officers in Lisbon overthrew the Portuguese dictatorship in 1974, and granted independence to the African colonies. The new revolutionary government in Angola promptly invited SWAPO to establish bases. The Namibian guerrilla movement now had a border eight hundred miles long across which to infiltrate. The strip of territory just south of that border is the most thickly populated section of Namibia, with nearly half the country's one and one-quarter million people. The SWAPO soldiers would not lack for supporters to feed and hide them.

By the early 1980s, a SWAPO force of up to eight thousand was fighting a full-scale guerrilla war in northern Namibia. After being rebuffed by the West in its search for arms, SWAPO turned to Cuba and the Soviet Union for some military aid, and the Scandinavians provided generous assistance. In response to the guerrilla advances, South Africa, which had at first easily controlled the insurgency with its police, dispatched a massive expeditionary force of one hundred thousand soldiers. (If the U.S. Army had been as large a percentage of the Vietnamese population, it would have numbered 2.5 million, or five times its actual peak size.)

It was no surprise that black Namibians were giving SWAPO strong support. Pretoria had installed a system of apartheid in the territory that was, if anything, harsher than the one in South Africa itself. By law, most black Namibians were confined to nine remote, impoverished rural Bantustans, modeled after those in South Africa. They were allowed in the rest of the territory only on sufferance, after signing migratory labor contracts. They lived in single-sex quarters on the diamond and uranium mines or on the huge sheep ranches, apart from their families for most of the year. An estimated two-thirds of all Namibian workers are migrants, which is a higher proportion even than in South Africa, and probably unequalled anywhere in the world.

As Herman Toivo, one of SWAPO's leaders, told a South African court in 1967, before he was led away to begin his twenty-year prison term, "Many of our people, through no fault of their own, have had no education at all. This does not mean that they do not know what they want. A man does not have to be formally educated to know that he wants to live with his family where he wants to live, and not where an official chooses to tell him to live; to move about freely and not require a pass; to earn a decent wage; to be free to work for the person of his choice as long as he wants; and finally to be ruled by the people that he wants to be ruled by, and not by those who rule him because they have more guns than he has."

To try to counter SWAPO, South Africa created a stand-in movement in Namibia, the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance, and funded it lavishly. The D.T.A., which had some blacks in its leadership, did lobby successfully for the repeal of certain "petty" apartheid statutes, such as the segregation of restaurants. But other facilities, such as schools and hospitals, remained unchanged. These minimal modifications did nothing but alienate a majority of the seventy-five thousand whites, while not going nearly far enough to win much black support.

THE SOUTH AFRICAN government's doubts about the strength of its surrogate increased greatly after the historic 1980 elections in which Rhodesia became Zimbabwe. To South Africa's horror, the guerrilla alliance led by Robert Mugabe that it had labeled "terrorist" won 87 percent of the vote. Inside Namibia, there is by now little disagreement with the recent report released by the Windhoek Vicariate of the Catholic Church, which said, "Support for SWAPO is massive and it would easily be victorious in any free and fair election."

South Africa is now trapped in the negotiating process that John Vorster entered at a more propitious time. In 1977 the U.N., in an effort to be accommodating, delegated its bargaining authority to a "contact group" of the

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United States, Britain, West Germany, France, and Canada, known as the "Western Five." But the Western Five's relative affability in the negotiations has not helped South Africa to become reconciled to the underlying reality—that a genuine settlement would bring SWAPO to political power.

Therefore, South Africa has stalled. Whenever the negotiations have appeared close to success, as in 1978 and again in 1982, the apartheid regime has raised new obstacles. Its most recent condition is that a Namibian settlement must be accompanied by the withdrawal of the estimated twenty thousand Cuban troops that remain in Angola. This is an ironic negotiating ploy, given that many on-the-spot observers believe that one of the reasons Pretoria launches its regular invasions into Angola is precisely because it *wants* to clash with the Cubans, in the hope that a wider war with potential East-West ramifications will obscure its own continued illegal occupation of Namibia. The Cubans, perhaps realizing Pretoria's bellicose intentions, have remained in the rear in Angola; they have not clashed on a large scale with South African troops since 1975. Those who feared that the Cuban soldiers would somehow subvert the entire region have been mistaken.

South Africa's invasions also have served to concentrate attention on the struggle for power in Angola between the M.P.L.A. government and Pretoria's ally, Jonas Savimbi, and his insurgent UNITA movement. In this debate, South Africa's own illegal position in Namibia, which antedates the Angola dispute by several decades, gets shunted even further to the side.

By contrast with South Africa, SWAPO and its allies in the front-line African states have shown a willingness to compromise. For example, South Africa says it has the right to retain a strategic territorial enclave around Walvis Bay, Namibia's only deep-water port, because it has inherited a nineteenth-century British claim. SWAPO has already agreed to defer talks about the port until after independence, even though South Africa's continued undisputed control would give it a stranglehold over the new country.

SOUTH AFRICA does not fear that an independent Namibia would be a serious threat to its own existence. The government's major worry is, rather, the domestic political reaction among whites. Prime Minister P. W. Botha and his ruling National Party are already under fierce attack from two parties that are even further to the right. Any hint at transferring power to SWAPO would provoke a militant and quite possibly violent reaction among the whites in Namibia, just as the French colonists in Algeria formed the right-wing O.A.S. there in the early 1960s to resist independence violently. And the Namibian right would not lack for allies in the mother country.

South Africa's casualties in the war so far have made withdrawal even more unthinkable. According to the government, some twenty-one of its soldiers died in the latest invasion of Angola. The figures are not at all exact, but the overall death toll is now somewhere around three hundred. That number, as a proportion of the white South African population, is equivalent to about fifteen thousand dead Americans. The vast majority of whites in South Africa are not going to sit quietly by as their government hands power to the "Communist terrorists" whom their friends and relatives died fighting against.

But the South African regime does have one possible, terrifying way out of the stalemate, a way for which there is even a grim precedent. Imperial Germany, the territory's original colonizer, put down an uprising early in this century by killing all but fifteen thousand of the sixty thousand to eighty thousand Herero people, one of Namibia's ethnic groups, who had started the revolt. "That nation must vanish from the face of the earth," wrote General Lothar Von Trotha. The Herero did not reach their 1904 population level again until the mid-1970s.

IN A COUNTRY with a larger population, a similar campaign of extermination today would probably have to be on a scale large enough to attract world attention. But there are only one and one-quarter million people in Namibia, and only half of them live in the battle zones of the far north. Already an estimated sixty thousand people have fled north to Angola. The South African military, which operates in almost total secrecy, could simply kill or expel the remaining civilians, and then declare the ensuing calm a victory over terrorism.

There are signs that Pretoria is already putting it into practice. There are the regular invasions of Angola, with their suspicious, unverifiable casualty figures. The army has declared the region close to the border a no-man's-land, and forced residents to evacuate the area or be shot. An elite paramilitary unit called *Koevoet*, Afrikaans for "crowbar," roams through the north, torturing and killing. The army's own statistics on the number of people it says it has killed, wounded, and captured are prima facie evidence that it has committed crimes of war.

The Reagan Administration took office promising a policy of "constructive engagement" toward the South African regime, and rejecting calls for sanctions or other economic pressure. Instead, the United States would mute its criticism of apartheid, and even relax certain restrictions on high-technology exports in the nuclear and computer fields. In return, the Administration expected South Africa to start to compromise, especially by moving toward an acceptable settlement in Namibia.

Three years later, despite yet another naive attempt to revive negotiations with South Africa, the Administration's policy has failed. The other members of the Western Five have seen through South Africa's strategy of permanent delay. France has left the contact group entirely, and even the more conservative British and West German governments are distancing themselves from the American stance. Only the Reagan Administration persists with its faith in the sincerity of a South African regime that has stalled on Namibia since Harry Truman was President. But United States policy is not merely fatuous. The Administration may be in danger of tolerating mass murder.

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In Central America, 'Hell is truth seen too late.'

MY TALKS WITH THE CUBANS

BY LUIS BURSTIN

San José, Costa Rica

ON DECEMBER 28, 1981, I received a phone call from Manuel Mora, the secretary general of the Communist Party of Costa Rica. Mora has held this position for fifty years, and he is a widely known and respected figure in Latin American politics. Among other dramatic changes he has brought about in Costa Rica, he allied his Popular Vanguard Party with the Republican Party and the Catholic Church in the 1940s, and with his new bourgeois allies introduced vast social reforms, which were later widened by the social democratic parties in our country. He also has—as far as these things are known—the complete confidence of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. I was Mora's friend, political colleague, and personal doctor from 1962 to 1967. But after the Six Day War in 1967, we engaged in bitter public debate about the Middle East; he supported the Arabs, I supported Israel. As a result, I distanced myself from him and from most of the left in Costa Rica. I had not heard from Mora since 1969 until my wife told me, "Manuel Mora is on the phone." How do you begin a conversation with a friend to whom you haven't even said hello for more than a decade? With jokes, of course. But he told me that it was urgent that we talk, and asked if he could stop by my house.

I had no idea at the time that this unexpected phone call would lead to continuing dialogue between Mora, high-ranking Cuban officials, and me—followed by discussions with officials in Washington—about how to achieve peace in Central America, and about the possibility of an agreement between the United States and Cuba to guarantee it.

Why was I picked? In addition to my political affiliations in Costa Rica—I served in the cabinet as secretary of information from 1974 to 1978 and as director of political campaigns for the social democratic National Liberation Party—I am a Jew and a Zionist, and in the Latin American left the belief runs deep that Jews and Zionists control everything: the banks, the media, the U.S. government, even, according to some, the Kremlin. Who better to deal with these intimidating entities than someone with access to the mysterious power of *el pueblo elegido*?

Besides, Mora told me later, he came to me because he believed the only people who could really understand what was going on here in Central America were the people who lived here. He was surely correct. Too often when people speak of Central America they suffer from an intellectual hallucination: they believe that understanding it is a matter of a bit of politics, a little economics, a good dose of subversion, and a few slogans. U.S. politicians regularly come to our countries, stay a few hours, converse a few minutes with a handful of our political leaders (who generally are in complete agreement with whatever the visitors say), attend a gala reception in the U.S. Embassy (in which the majority of those present are in complete agreement with whatever the visitors say), and then return quickly to the United States. Once home they immediately become "experts." But as John Locke said, no man's knowledge goes beyond his experience.

Mora began our conversation (which I later recorded to the best of my recollection) with a long monologue in which he declared that if some simple steps were taken, peace, stability, and social progress in Central America could be achieved, the danger of a thermonuclear war alleviated, and imperialism defeated, once and for all. Only later—and very indirectly—did he begin to describe those simple steps. "The Sandinista leaders were valiant and patriotic men, but a little young and inexperienced," he said. "The time will come when they begin to understand that 'the true revolution' isn't made rhetorically, especially in a war against the United States." But Mora insisted that just as the Sandinista leaders would have to better understand the realities confronting them, so too would the United States have to better understand Central American countries, especially in regard to their natural resources and national sovereignty.

"The United States must not act militarily," he emphasized. "Fidel Castro and I are working," he claimed, "to convince the Central American revolutionaries not to commit errors which could explode and spread war to all of Central America. Some '*compañeros*,' especially among the Salvadoran guerrillas, didn't understand this because they are a little 'dogmatic,' but we will continue to try to convince them."

Castro, Mora said, "is a mature and responsible political leader, who is preoccupied with the possibility that events in Central America might slip out of the control of everyone and lead to a general war, which no one wants." Mora

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Luis Burstin is a former Costa Rican Secretary of Information, newspaper editor, and TV commentator. A Fellow of the Royal Society of Medicine, London, he is director of the Clinica Burstin in San José, Costa Rica.

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concluded with a startling proposition. Would I be willing to participate in negotiations to reach an accommodation that everybody—Castro, President Reagan, the Sandinistas, the Salvadorans—could live with?

I didn't answer right away. Instead I made a lengthy statement of my own. Fundamentally, I said, the United States was not interested in "exploiting" our natural resources at the expense of our people. On the contrary, without foreign capital and technology, especially from the United States, our natural resources would have remained where they were, benefiting no one. I said the United States today did not object to social change or even social revolutions—as long as these revolutions did not align themselves with the Soviet Union. "You must recognize," I told him, "that the United States has legitimate strategic interests, just as the Soviet Union has, and Central America is wrapped up in these legitimate strategic interests." His responses were noncommittal.

I asked Mora whether respect for the sovereignty of these countries meant that while the United States must not intervene anywhere, Cuba has the right to assist the movements of "national liberation" through so-called "proletarian internationalism." I made it clear that there would be no possibility of talking seriously unless this "assistance" stopped, and asked him who would guarantee an agreement between Cuba and the United States.

He replied, "The Soviet Union would guarantee whatever agreement was reached, and this could be achieved even at the level of the Security Council. The Cuban leaders are very interested and are in accord with everything I say." I admitted that this was all very interesting, but asked how else I would be able to help him. He answered with a question of his own: "Would you be able to find out from your friends in the United States if a proposal containing the points which we have discussed would be positively received by the American goverment and, if so, would you take that proposal to Washington?"

I wanted to know why he didn't use a more suitable intermediary, such as one of the European socialist leaders. "Well," he told me, "all types of contacts have been made, and are being made, but to me it seems that you are well connected with the Jewish world, and therefore you must have friends in Washington. I have the confidence of the Cuban and Soviet leaders. Therefore we should be able to achieve something."

ALL OF THIS seemed to me strangely like a repetition of the Cuban missile crisis of 1962, but without the missiles as yet. The frightening new reality, destined to modify the geopolitical chessboard, was that the Soviets and the Cubans—whether by design or by accident—were up to their necks in Central America. Why was Manuel Mora speaking of negotiations, of concrete proposals, of global agreements? After all, if the overthrow of a dictator in Nicaragua by the "progressive" people was truly an authentic Latin American movement, without international obligations—and likewise the attempt by Salvadorans to depose another classic dictatorship—then what did Manuel Mora have to do with it, speaking as if it were his personal matter? On the other hand, having hammered a nail into the very ribs of the United States, he was now proposing to remove it. Why? Out of pure geopolitical generosity, in exchange for nothing?

Events passed quickly. I wrote a memorandum on the whole story, which I gave to the political attaché of the American Embassy, asking him to see that it was delivered to his superiors in Washington. When he read it, he commented to me that it contained nothing new, just the same old Cuban story. I also sent the memorandum to a friend in Washington, closely associated with the Reagan Administration, who said he would send it along to William Clark, then Deputy Secretary of State.

IN EARLY January 1982, I received an answer from my friend in Washington: if the Cubans had a "concrete and specific proposal," there would be interest in seeing it, but there were strong doubts about whether they were talking seriously. I passed on this message, word for word, to Mora, who was in Havana. Within hours I was invited by the Cuban government to go to Havana to discuss the subject in more detail. I answered that I would go if I would be given a specific proposal. I was told I would, and the following day, January 14, I landed in Havana.

I was greeted at the José Martí Airport by Mora and by Adalberto Marrero and Roberto Márquez, high functionaries in the Cuban Communist Party who oversee Central American affairs. In the airport's diplomatic lounge, Mora told Márquez and Marrero that I had just finished constructing a very beautiful house in San José, and, given my great bourgeois tastes, they should find appropriate lodgings for me. I explained to the Cubans that I built the house so that when Manuel Mora and his *compañeros* take power and begin the expropriations, they'll have a nice place in which to live.

"No," said Mora, "What we're going to expropriate is the Burstin Clinic." I turned to Márquez and Marrero. "You two can be the witnesses of the deal that I just closed with Mora," I told them. "I haven't even been in Havana ten minutes and we have concluded the first bit of negotiation. I had resigned myself to losing everything, and I just won 50 percent. But I want it in writing." All of this must have enormously reinforced my Zionist image.

They put me in the Havana Libre Hotel, formerly the Havana Hilton. In the next five days I met frequently with my hosts in the headquarters of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba, which is something like the Vatican of the Latin American left. The meetings were held in the offices of Manuel Piñeiro, chief of the Communist Party's Department of the Americas, a man known for his red beard, his aggressiveness, and his intelligence. Also attending were Márquez, Marrero, and José Arbezú, a man with whom I would later talk for many hours, who is in charge of U.S., Canadian, and Puerto Rican affairs.

Piñeiro, wearing his military uniform, greeted me jokingly as "the famous Zionist agent," so at first we talked

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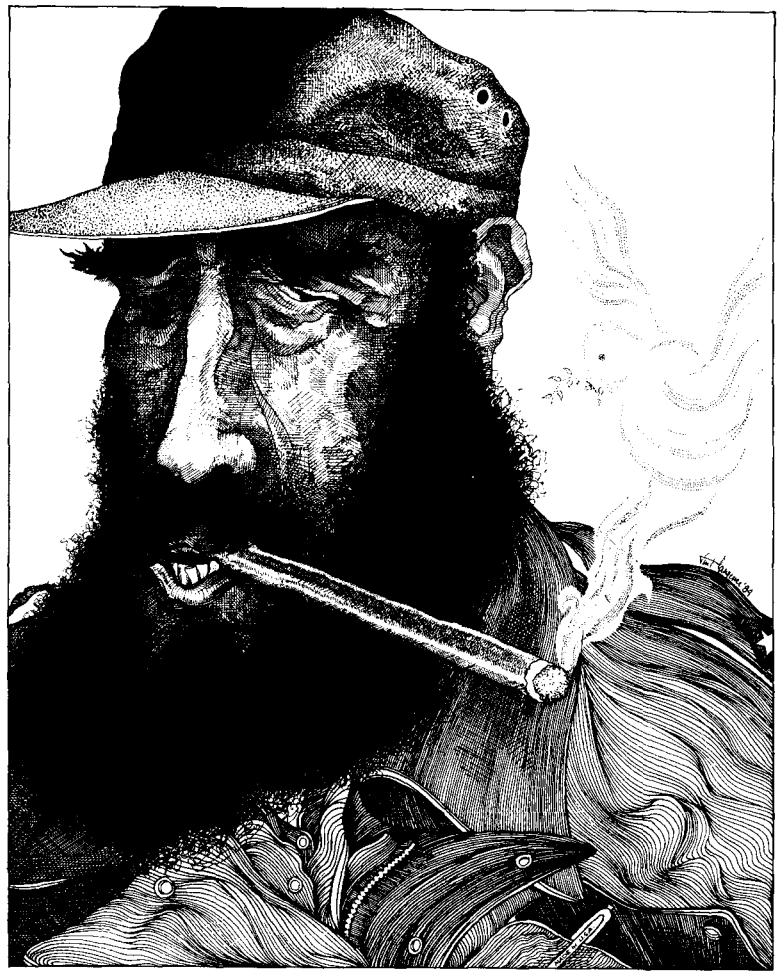
only about Israel—or rather I talked about Israel and they listened. But at no point did they seem bothered by my angry argument. In fact, at certain moments I felt that in this group of professional revolutionaries there was sympathy for Israel, and admiration for its technical and social achievements. It was Piñeiro who brought the discussion back to the original reason for my trip."Well," he said, "are the gringos serious this time?"

I replied, "the 'international assistance' you are giving to the Marxist revolutionaries in Central America is incompatible with any possibility of success of any proposal. As to whether the gringos are speaking seriously this time, I don't know what else to tell you except that my friends in Washington asked the same thing about you: Are the Cubans serious this time?" The Cubans had always been serious, Piñeiro answered. He said that he would have a proposal for me within a few days, but that it would be signed by Manuel Mora, because the Cubans didn't want to sign any document until they knew "how the United States is going to react this time." Piñeiro also didn't want to sign any papers because they would be "lost in some government office only to reappear on the front page of *The Washington Post*."



DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

I had one point to make first. Inspired perhaps by those recent visits of the North American politicians to Central America, I decided that I, too, after a few days of being in Havana, was an expert in Cuban matters. "What you did here is relatively easy to understand," I said. "Since the revolution, you have taken some six million persons—who were basically miserable, as in all our countries—and converted them from miserable into poor: important progress in historic terms. None of our countries have been able to do that, not even Costa Rica. But the middle class—say a million people—have left Cuba. And your Soviet subsidy, according to the commonly accepted figures, comes to $4 billion every year, and I don't believe that it will increase much. You created an advanced infrastructure in public health and also in basic education. To pass now from poor to less poor is going to be practically impossible, if things continue as they are. Only with what I would call the 'Yugoslavization' of Cuba could I see Cuba going from poor to less poor and maybe someday to rich. But 'Yugoslavization' signifies many important changes in Cuba, and the most important change would be in dealing with the United States." Again, my hosts expressed neither anger nor agreement. Patiently, they said nothing.

On January 18 Mora gave me the proposal. It was four typewritten pages. He signed it in the presence of Márquez and Marrero, who assured me many times that Fidel and Piñeiro were in agreement with all that it said. Read superficially, it was an essay on Yankee imperialism and its fatal consequences. But read with care, it was a fascinating document that suggested the Cubans' willingness to compromise. On page three, after describing the problems of the Caribbean from the Marxist point of view, a new section begins, entitled "Procedure to follow:"

> It seems to me that *the first step* which should be taken is the establishing of commercial and diplomatic relations between the United States and Cuba. This act would create better conditions *for a total negotiation* in the Caribbean zone and would greatly lower tensions. To establish these relations it seems to me that it would suffice for the United States to decide *to lift the blockade of Cuba* without insisting on conditions that obviously cannot be accepted by Cuba . . . the important thing is *to open the door to begin to negotiate* and this is the big importance of the establishment of relations . . . the next step could be an agreement between the United States and Nicaragua, in which Cuba could intervene as an intermediary. . . .

On the plane returning to Costa Rica my mind seethed with questions and answers. I asked myself why, in order to pacify Central America, the establishment of commercial and diplomatic relations is required *as a first step*. Again the situation reminded me of the Cuban missile crisis and the way it was resolved: no U.S. invasion, no Cuban missiles. Here it seemed to me was another

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possible trade: no more U.S. boycott of Cuba, no more Cuban intervention in Central America.

The following day I delivered a copy of the document signed by Mora to the U.S. ambassador in San José, and also sent it to my friends in Washington. They said it didn't seem to contain anything new. Besides, it was necessary to "verify its credibility," to find out if the Cubans truly subscribed to all that Mora had affirmed.

I also related my latest adventures to the Israeli ambassador in Costa Rica, and how the Cubans had seemed sympathetic to Israel. I sent a memorandum directly to Castro suggesting that Cuba reestablish diplomatic and trade relations with Israel. There was no response.

Some weeks later, on February 22, 1982, the president of Mexico, José López-Portillo, presented what came to be known as "the Mexican proposal" for peace in Central America. The essential points of the proposal could have been extracted from the document that Mora had handed to me in Havana five weeks earlier. Castro immediately endorsed the López-Portillo proposal. Mora called me and said, "Now you have the proof of credibility that your friends in the United States were looking for."

After several days, my friends in the United States let me know that there was no interest in the Cuban proposal. Fidel Castro continued working arduously at resolving the problems of Cuba's international finances. In Central America, the dead continued filling graves by the thousands, people continued going into exile by the tens of thousands. Hobbes once uttered a truth I wish I had come up with first: "Hell is truth seen too late."

BY THE END of 1982 I followed up on my memo to Castro about Israel with a very specific proposal from a consortium of Israeli companies. They offered to install agro-industrial complexes in Cuba that would produce machinery, irrigation equipment, and chemical products. The Cubans would repay on flexible terms, or with goods of their own. In April 1983, I received some news. Márquez and Marrero arrived in Costa Rica, apparently invited by officials of our government. They called me to say that Cuba was interested in the Israeli proposal. ("Fourteen months later?" I said to my wife, "I don't remember sending that proposal by burro.") They invited me to Havana to discuss the proposal and "to renew old conversations," as Márquez told me. I returned to Havana in May.

Everyone there with whom I discussed the Israeli proposal showed an interest in everything proposed, and we agreed that they would study the proposals some more and get in touch with me as soon as they were ready to negotiate. I'm still waiting.

I experienced more progress on the political front. I was advised the next day that I would be visited that night in my room at the Hotel Havana Riviera by some leaders of the Party. José Arbezú, accompanied by Piñeiro, Márquez, and Marrero, knocked on the door a little before 7:30. We sat down with the door to the balcony open. The hotel is right on the famous Malecon of Havana, and from my room on the sixteenth floor I got the impression that if I stretched a little I could see the lights of Miami. The night, like so many early summer nights in Havana, was gorgeous, and the ocean was silvery with the moon.

I reminded them that President Reagan had been saying for two years that Central America is vital to the United States. If the Salvadoran guerrillas take power, the probability that Reagan would feel obligated to intervene militarily would increase enormously. I continued to press them: "And do you believe that if a war is unleashed in Central America you would be completely immune? Are you sure that the Soviet Union is going to launch intercontinental missiles if the U.S. sees itself as forced, by the logic of the circumstances, to intervene militarily in the area, including in Cuba? Are you sure?" They said no, certainly not.

"YOU SPEAK of normalizing relations with the United States," I said. "That is not possible with what is happening in Central America. I said it here a year and a half ago, and I repeat it now. That which you call 'international solidarity with the people in their fight for liberation,' and which the United States calls 'communist subversion inspired and directed by Moscow,' I'm going to call 'A,' and by this we'll understand each other. 'A' is not only incompatible with the normalization that the proposals signed by Mora refer to, but it is incompatible with what I call the necessity that I see of the 'Yugoslavization' of Cuba. 'A' is already making direct military intervention by the United States in Central America more likely. The probability is that the United States would decide, in the case of such a convulsion, to go directly to the 'source.' You are the 'source.' To me it seems that 'A' is bringing us closer every day to war. You must decide if what you want is 'A'—which is incompatible with so many things, and now risks setting the entire region on fire—or if what you want is a new stage in your economic development and a restructuring of all your political relations, honorable and decent for everyone. The ball is in your court."

"No, the ball isn't in our court," Aberzú said. An intelligent man. "Don't you remember that we gave you a proposal which you sent to Washington, and nothing happened? We have made many attempts through other means, but they don't want to talk with us. What do they want from us? That we humiliate ourselves in front of them, that we fall begging to our knees? We are ready to negotiate, but the ball is in the United States' court."

"It seems to me," I said, "that you are very much in agreement with me regarding almost everything I have said about the revolution in Central America. Nevertheless, two and a half years ago, the leaders of the Salvadoran guerrillas told me in San José that the only solution was a military one, with absolutely no negotiations."

"Who said all of that?" Aberzú demanded.

"Carpio, for example."

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"Carpio is dead."

(A flashback: in early 1981 I met with the leadership of the Salvadoran guerrillas, including their senior military commander, Cayetano Carpio. I was baffled by their intransigent and immature dogmatism and came away despairing for peace. When I left that meeting the night was cold and there was fog on all horizons.) Exactly three weeks earlier Commander Carpio had, by official accounts, committed suicide in Managua. "*¿Quien lo suicido?*" I asked: Who "suicided" him? The Cubans seemed to appreciate this black humor. They were not unaware that Carpio's death might make it easier for them to cut a deal with the United States. But given the previous unwillingness of the Cuban-supported guerrillas to enter negotiations, it was now up to the Cubans to show they were ready to talk. "The ball is in *your* court," I told them.

"You say they're going to invade us," Aberzú said.

"No, I didn't say that. I said that the probabilities are greater now than they were a year ago."

"Tell your friends in the United States that we understand what they mean by stability; we haven't had it since 1959. The United States has a legitimate right to stability just like any country, and even more so because it is a superpower. Tell them that we're the best guarantee for the stability they want throughout the Caribbean and Central America. If the U.S. begins normalization, then we can solve all problems. But if they invade us, chico, we will all die here, arm in arm."

"I have no doubt about that. Arm in arm, but everyone's going to die. What kind of policy is that? You all seem like you're from Masada."

IT WAS 2 A.M. There were empty rum bottles on the table, cigar smoke in the air, and the lights of Havana and Miami in the distance. I tried one more time. I reminded them of Mora's document, which they had all approved and I had taken to Washington a year and a half before. It asserted then that the first step to be taken in the pacification of the area was the normalization of commercial and diplomatic relations between the United States and Cuba. "In my next visit to the United States, would you agree to my saying exactly that?"

"No, not in that way. You can say that they should speak with us first about our bilateral problems, and later we'll discuss the rest." A silence followed, long and silvery from the moon.

"That's the same thing," I said.

After this delightful night I went to Washington and met with Alfonso Sapia-Bosch, then the National Security Council's expert on Central America. Another intelligent man. He listened to my story carefully, took many notes, and asked me back the next day to talk again. But Washington still wasn't interested.

On October 24, José Arbezú telephoned me from Havana. "I must talk to you," he said. We arranged to meet in New York, at the beginning of November, but the meeting never took place: on October 25 the United States invaded Grenada, and Arbezú got word to me that it was impossible for him to travel. At the beginning of November, I was again invited to New York, to discuss my Cuban experiences with Henry Kissinger. I proposed that we postpone the meeting until I could check on the Cuban position at that time, to find out if there was anything new in connection with the previous proposals. I then called Arbezú to ask him precisely that.

"Well, Grenada, friend," he said. "What do you think?"

"What I don't know, Arbezú, is whether dominoes is an exclusively Marxist game, or whether there is a domino theory also applicable to the United States' actions. What I do know, Arbezú, is that one day there will be either war or peace. I don't know when, but it depends on you."

In the meantime, I called Manuel Mora and asked him what position his party and the Cubans had taken regarding the new situation created by the Grenada invasion. On November 23 Mora gave me a revised version of his earlier document, which laid out their new interpretation. A few days later, a Cuban delegate sent by Aberzú arrived in San José. He said the Cuban government was in full agreement with the Mora document. I also asked Mora, "Is this the official position of the Cuban government, and of the Sandinista leaders, and of the Salvadoran guerrillas?"

"Yes," he replied, "it is. You can tell them categorically."

AND WHAT is new in this document? An explicit confirmation of what they understand very well, even though they don't like what they understand. It goes beyond even what was in Mora's previous memorandum to acknowledge explicitly the United States' interests:

> That the Caribbean area is of vital interest to the United States . . . but we cannot accept the means which have been used in the past, nor those being used at present, to secure this control. It is in the interest of neither the Soviet Union nor Cuba to sabotage the security of the United States in the Caribbean area . . . nor to establish military bases in that area . . . of this I am sure. The Soviet Union has an obligation to help toward world peace and this they will not obtain by meddling, directly or indirectly, in an area which the United States considers vital to its security . . .

A Brezhnev doctrine for the United States proposed by the Communists? I wondered. I was certain—I am certain—that Castro and the Cubans would go from poor to less poor, to avoid war, to make a deal. But as long as they supported "proletarian internationalism"—what I called "A"—these negotiations in which I was playing a part would go back and forth forever. Which court is the ball in now? I think it is in the air. And someday all this will end in either war or peace.

I remember now my last night in Havana. In contrast to my meeting with the Salvadoran guerrilla leaders three years ago, the night was warm and clear, with no fog on the horizon or in my mind. What good did all the books I'd read do me? John Locke was right: no man's knowledge goes beyond his experience.

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STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

Sailing With Fellini

The screenplay of Federico Fellini's new film, *And the Ship Sails On*, which he wrote with Tonino Guerra, is so transparently symbolic—by design, I think—that to recount the story is to reveal the symbolism. In July 1914 an Italian luxury liner called the *Gloria N.* sails on a special voyage. The ship carries the ashes of a great soprano, Edmea Tetua,

And the Ship Sails On
(Triumph)

who died fairly young and who had requested that her ashes be cast into the sea off the island where she was born. Accompanying the ashes are many notables of music, singers and conductors and impresarios from all over Europe. Also aboard are at least three of Tetua's lovers: a fat Egyptian who is accompanied by some veiled wives; a wan count who is accompanied by some newsreel film of his beloved; and a plump young Austrian duke who is accompanied by his blind sister and their retinue.

During the voyage, which starts shortly after the assassination at Sarajevo, a number of refugee Serbs are taken aboard. An Austro-Hungarian warship intercepts the *Gloria N.* and demands that the Serbs be handed over. The Italian captain refuses, and the warship threatens. The Austrian duke informs the warship that he is aboard the liner, and the *Gloria N.* is permitted to proceed to the island. During the funeral service, a phonograph plays a Tetua recording of an air from *Aida*, "O Patria mia." After the ashes are scattered, the duke and his party set out for the warship, and the Serbs are ordered into boats to be transferred to the warship. Before they are put aboard the enemy, a Serb youth tosses a bomb into a gun turret of the warship, which starts a series of explosions, and the Austro-Hungarians cannonade the *Gloria N.*, apparently considering the Italians responsible. Both ships are lost.

Add to this outline a few details. Opera, mostly Verdi, is not only prominent in the film score, it is part of the film's action: when the warship threatens, a conductor on the *Gloria N.* whips out a baton, and the passengers burst into an operatic chorus as a defense measure. Among the passengers, besides flirtations and romances and cherished romantic memories, are several strains of unorthodox sexuality: an English woman is pantingly avid for men, and her husband relishes her avidity for others; a toothless old man likes little girls; a silent-film comic likes young men. As the *Gloria N.* founders, an Italian journalist, who has been our guide and confidant during the voyage, grabs the picture of Garibaldi in his stateroom and clambers into a rowboat; the last shot is of the correspondent making for shore, his sole companion a rhinoceros that had been destined for a zoo and whose stink has disturbed the passengers during the voyage.

Interpretation is unnecessary.

The symbolism is so transparent because, I think, we are meant to see through it to the film's real richness. Fellini, with Guerra, wrote the script, not for its meaning(s) but because of the way he wanted to film it. This is not the first time Fellini has made a film whose chief rewards are in its style, but this time he seems to have planned it that way.

His career patently divides in two: first, the so-called neorealistic films through *The Nights of Cabiria* (1957); second, those from *La Dolce Vita* (1960) to this new one, works that take the baroque as far, often gloriously so, as it has gone in film art. Excepting the masterworks *8½* and *Amarcord*, excepting too that lesser but lovely memoir-tribute *The Clowns*, the baroque films were conceived much in the manner of opera before this century: the stories were mere scaffoldings for stylistic display. The three autobiographical films cited above prove that pyrotechnics and thematic weight need not be mutually exclusive; his other baroque films dazzle but eventually disappoint, like fireworks that promise a change in the heavens but leave you in the dark. Of course Fellini's fireworks are repeatable, but so is the eventual letdown. Lately I saw *Juliet of the Spirits* again and was again overwhelmed by its visual splendors; but the film promises some kind of enlightenment about the status of women in our society, on which subject it simply cops out.

And the Ship Sails On makes no corresponding promise. From the start, it is no more, and no less, than an ingenious arrangement of events that will give Fellini ample chance to exercise his filmmaking virtuosity. Which he does.

He began, as always, by choosing colleagues who are in temperamental harmony with him, virtual extensions of his own imagination. The art direction by Dante Ferretti (costumes by Maurizio Millenotti) is not quite at the level of the late Piero Gherardi's work for Fellini, but it is eccentrically gorgeous. The music by Gianfranco Plenizio, if it doesn't have the tunes with which the late Nino Rota stabbed our hearts, uses Verdi with understanding and wryness; and the rest of the time is pleasant ear-cushioning. Giuseppe Rotunno's cinematography is predictably superb, es-

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Basileus Quartet. An exceptional first film, Italian, about musicians. A new young member of a quartet drastically alters the lives of the older three. (Reviewed 1/30/84)

Dear Maestro. Another exceptional first film, Italian, about musicians. The rivalry of two conductors, 40, friends, reveals more to us than to them. (2/6/84)

Gorky Park. A thriller that thrills, set mostly in Moscow. Well directed and, except for the leading role, well performed. (2/6/84)

Reuben, Reuben. Patently based on Dylan Thomas's last days in America. Movingly acted by Tom Conti and, as his last love, Kelly McGillis. Frazzled finish, but literate dialogue en route. (1/30/84)

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pecially as he turns backgrounds into dreams and makes the moonlight his ally. Ruggero Mastroianni, Marcello's brother, has edited all Fellini films since *Juliet of the Spirits* and has almost become part of the director's persona.

Then there's Fellini's approach to casting. With some past exceptions, notably Marcello M., he chooses his actors for their faces and bodies; the voices are at his disposal, just as much a part of the sound track he will later put together as are the music and sound effects. As a view of acting, this is anathema to me, but Fellini is one of the rare exceptions that prove the rule. As far as I can tell, every performer in this new film has a voice that Fellini has chosen, usually humorously, for him or her. The faces-and-bodies are well up to his best standard—in a word, Daumier.

With his production and performance colleagues, Fellini has created a flow of images that transforms the material world into magic and eloquence. Here are only a few of the pictures that will stay with me: a group of opera singers on the visitors' gallery of the liner's boiler-room, performing for the huddled stokers far below who look up to them, like martyrs to saviors, in the glow of the furnaces; the fine-faced blind Austrian princess, smiling with secrets in the midst of tumult; the shot through the porthole of the wireless room that shows a skillet of spaghetti on the operator's table as he taps away for help; the water rushing through the corridors of the sinking *Gloria N.*, floating passengers' luggage along with it; the dead soprano's faithful lover sitting calmly in his suite on the doomed ship, watching a film of his beloved as the water rises around him.

Most of the recognizable faces are English: Janet Suzman as the dead diva in the newsreel shots; Barbara Jefford as a surviving diva; Philip Locke as the blind princess's lover; Freddie Jones (who was Sir in the London production of *The Dresser*) as the journalist. There is no protagonist. The interweaving of numerous stories is congenial to Fellini's style; he is the protagonist.

Some of the touches are familiar from his past work—e.g., the seance (*Juliet*), the Moslem with veiled wives (*Amarcord*)—but these are more hallmarks than empty repetitions. One element, one set of elements, is bothersome. Throughout the film, Fellini uses camera awareness. The journalist frequently addresses the camera as if, anachron-

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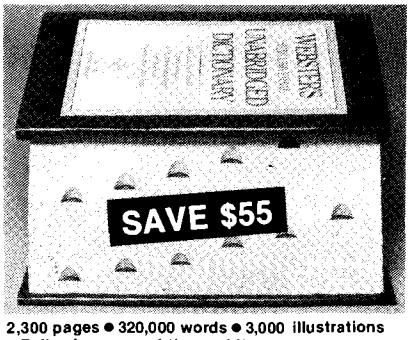

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istically, he were making a sound-film record of the voyage; others see the camera, too. In *Amarcord* this camera awareness was poignant, the townsfolk of the past recording themselves to ward off oblivion. Here the device adds nothing. Fellini also uses some quaint old-fashioned theater touches: in the long shots of the two ships, the smoke coming from funnels is fixed, as in cardboard cutouts; in the last scene, the sea is rippling canvas. I couldn't see the value, aesthetic or otherwise, of these small jokes, or of the glimpse near the end of the making of this very film. Such a moment occurs near the end of *Persona*, but in that great work about the complexities of consciousness, it is a last chilling touch that was prefigured from the start. Here it jars, as if Fellini just didn't want to miss any bets, was grabbing every chance for texture, whether it really helped or not.

But his *Ship* does indeed sail, even with a few barnacles. And, as usual, Fellini practices his wizardry with wit: from the extraordinary moustaches of the dining-room steward to the pomps of power and of romance.

One quality has resurged in him. Early Fellini was strongly marked by compassion: it was the chief impulse behind such films about poor people as *Il Bidone* and *I Vitelloni*. When he moved in part two to upper-class subjects, some of his films concentrated on disgust. In his new film, compassion figures strongly again, even for those who are bringing about the end of an era, for those willing to permit it. He hasn't forgotten that suffering is worse for the poor and powerless, but, older, he sees that disappointment and mortality are not class monopolies.

THE LEFT'S RECOVERY

Beyond the Waste Land: A Democratic Alternative to Economic Decline by Samuel Bowles, David M. Gordon, and Thomas E. Weisskopf

(Anchor Press/Doubleday, 465 pp., $17.95)

A New Social Contract: The Economy and Government After Reagan by Martin Carnoy, Derek Shearer, and Russell Rumberger

(Harper & Row, 243 pp., $14.95)

Recapitalizing America: Alternatives to the Corporate Distortion of National Policy by S. M. Miller and Donald Tomaskovic-Devey

(Routledge & Kegan Paul, 215 pp., $16.95)

Political economy today is an ideological shambles. President Reagan thinks he has engineered a recovery with a conservative supply-side program. In fact he has been saved by Keynes. The recovery is roaring along on deficit-fueled consumer spending, not capital investment. (Only the boldest of Keynesians would have recommended a $200 billion deficit as a cure for 11 percent unemployment.) Mr. Reagan, once the model of parsimony, is holding tightly to his deficit, while liberal Democrats—yesterday's Keynesians—denounce it. The monetarists, led by Professor Friedman, are furious at the Federal Reserve for deserting the faith—although Chairman Volcker's conversion to loose money is playing no small part in the recovery. In short, the economy has been saved by *counter*-Reaganomics: big deficits and easy money.

In this Alice in Wonderland world, most liberals haven't a clue what to pose as alternatives to Reaganomics. It's no longer clear what Reaganomics is, or what it isn't. Liberals are ideologically stymied. Like conservatives, they want American industry to revive. With the conservatives, they have limited faith that government planning would improve upon market outcomes. "Full employment" might be a liberal alternative, but most liberals have been persuaded that full employment would be inflationary. Keynes may have saved Reagan, but Keynesian full employment remains intellectually out of fashion for liberals. At the same time, "Cut the deficit" is hardly plausible as a liberal rallying cry. By default, "industrial policy" is the main contender, but the phrase has too many contradictory meanings, too slender a constituency, and in any case it is one lousy bumper sticker.

ACCORDING TO these three new books from the "democratic left," liberal economics is at an ideological dead end because it has accepted the central premise of conservative economics. That premise is the alleged crisis of capital supply. In a capitalist economy, not surprisingly, the main source of capital is private capitalists. If America truly is suffering mainly from too little private investment, then most of the conservative prescription of rewarding the rich and reducing the state follows logically enough. The difference between the liberal supply-siders—the advocates of industrial targeting—and the conservative supply-siders—the advocates of tax cuts and deregulation—is really minimal. Both accept the capital supply view. The only issue is government's competence to supply capital: whether government is a better friend of industry by subsidizing it more or by taxing it less. But both major parties have become the party of business. Nowadays, if a Secretary of Defense who happened to be a former auto executive were to remark that what is good for G.M. is good for America, nobody would take offense; the observation has become trite. We are all rooting for General Motors. Who else to root for—Toyota? Thus the liberal impasse.

The common theme of all three books is that liberal economics must find a new ground. The infatuation with technology, the experimentation with industrial targeting, and the liberal attempt to compete on conservative

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ground can't succeed because they lack either a valid analysis or an opposition politics. The authors all argue, in almost the same words, that "going beyond Reaganism requires going beyond liberalism." These works are better documented, less strident, and more aimed at a mainstream audience than most radical critiques. All deserve high marks for their case against the Reagan program (something of a gut course), and praise for their programmatic alternatives; understandably in the 1980s, their political realism is less convincing.

BOWLES, Gordon, and Weisskopf's *Beyond the Waste Land: A Democratic Alternative to Economic Decline* is by far the most ambitious of the three, and also the most Marxian. The book is cleverly argued, occasionally infuriating, and systematic to the point of being grandiose. Bowles and company challenge the claim that Americans must sacrifice well-being in favor of private investment. The zero-sum illusion, they contend, ignores the reality that the American economy is a slack economy, with industrial plant and human workers substantially underemployed. "When there is so much slack in the economy—as the result of unutilized or misutilized resources—*there can be such a thing as a free lunch.*"

The widespread waste is the by-product of a corporate-dominated economy, say the authors, and the way out of the economic waste land is via economic democracy: democratic control of investment capital; democratization of the work place; local democratic planning. Bowles et al. propose a twenty-four-point program to substitute criteria of social need for profit criteria; and to revive economic performance via full employment and "wage-led growth." It includes such liberal reforms as publicly supported child care and public investment; some very inventive ideas about more egalitarian wages and shorter working time; some new twists on price controls; and some frankly radical proposals like nationalizing banks.

Their prescription is one part full-blooded Keynes and one part socialism, though one will not find the word anywhere in the text. The fact that a perfectly good democratic socialist program must be articulated euphemistically—even by men who are not shy about their Marxism—speaks volumes about the circular isolation of the American left. Democratic socialism, it seems, is the ideology that dare not speak its name.

In the economics profession, Bowles, Gordon, and Weisskopf are the black sheep with pedigrees. All three authors got their graduate training in economics at Harvard circa 1970; they mastered the conventions of quantitative neoclassical economics, and then turned against it. They are part of the group that founded the Union of Radical Political Economists, U.R.P.E. They are very smart, and their elders still view them with the indulgent fondness reserved for brilliantly wayward pupils. Gordon, now chairman of the economics department at the New School, is probably the establishment's favorite academic Marxian. He comes from a family of prominent economists. He is the token radical economist whose opinion is occasionally quoted respectfully in the pages of *The New York Times*.

Beyond the Waste Land signals that U.R.P.E's brightest have come out of their ten-year Talmudic phase to join the mainstream policy debate. Their presence is welcome. Much of their basic argument is persuasive. The American economy *is* slack. Right-wing claims about capital supply are just plain statistically wrong. Waste is pervasive. Liberals do trap themselves by adopting conservative assumptions.

THERE ARE, however, two annoying things about the book. First, it is a bit coy and inconsistent in its radicalism, and as a result its descriptions are at odds with its prescriptions. Bowles and company can't quite decide whether American capitalism is hopelessly kaput, or whether reform is worthwhile. Through most of their narrative, economic stagnation is described as a natural consequence of the social conflicts bred by advanced capitalism; it is intrinsic to the system. Unlike many liberals, the authors agree with conservatives that trade unionism and consumer regulation indeed tend to hobble the capitalist *optima*. In Marxian hands, however, these admissions constitute a case not for supply-side economics but for democratic socialism.

When the authors turn to their twenty-four-point program, however, they suddenly sound far less apocalyptic. The need to issue a manifesto with presumably mainstream appeal collides with the Marxian insistence on inevitable stagnation. A mixed system is salvageable after all; it only needs a funda-

"My liege, thou shalt have the pox."

These dread words, addressed by a German physician to Elizabeth I of England, were similar to those heard by monarchs in every part of the world throughout the centuries.

In PRINCES AND PEASANTS, Donald R. Hopkins traces the devastating effects of smallpox, not only on kings, queens, and emperors but on untold millions of ordinary people struck down by this most egalitarian of all diseases.

The world's greatest achievement in public health was the eradication of smallpox. Hopkins was a participant in the World Health Organization's program which won final victory in 1978. An important part of this story is about the agelong struggle against the disease: the attempts to combat it with folk medicine, inoculation (which dates back to the 11th century) or the strange and persistent "red treatment;" with prayers to African or Asian deities or to a Catholic saint.

Hopkins is chiefly concerned to show how the blind chance of smallpox again and again changed the course of history by destroying dynasties, decimating armies, and ravaging populations. He is fascinated, too, by the fact, discovered in his research, that the fear, tragedy, despair, and bewilderment that he encountered firsthand in remote, poverty-stricken regions of Africa and Asia were experienced to the same degree in palaces throughout history and in hospitals in the not too distant past.

Princes and Peasants
Smallpox in History
DONALD R. HOPKINS
Illus. $25.00
University of **CHICAGO** Press

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mentally different set of policies. Theirs is an appealing program in many respects. But if advanced capitalism is fundamentally beyond repair, why is this set of reforms different from all others? And what conceivable political scenario would bring them about? In fairness, Bowles et al. would probably reply that their program, if enacted, would add up to what the French Marxist André Gorz calls nonreformist reform—a reform program whose logic eventually moves well beyond the capitalist welfare state.

THE BOOK also suffers from spurious rigor. According to the authors, the mysterious decline in productivity growth after the late 1960s was not the fault of falling capital investment, but rather was caused by the end of the American *pax economica* abroad and the rising social conflicts at home. The idea that stagnation reflects the tension between the logic of markets and the demands of egalitarianism is a reasonable enough proposition. Conservatives are saying much the same thing. But in their eagerness to "prove" the hypotheses that class struggle killed economic growth, the authors get onto very shaky methodological ground. As good economists, they turn to the usual tools of the trade and misappropriate some standard techniques from neoclassical econometric modeling. For example, they suggest that the declining ratio of blue-collar (production) to white-collar employees must reflect more supervisors making life miserable for workers. The statistics, of course, don't necessarily imply that at all. But for Bowles et al. this serves as scientific evidence of increased "intensity of supervision." Based on several pages of algebra, they announce grandly that "The puzzle of the productivity slowdown has been solved." Their abuse of algebra probably serves neoclassical economics right—it shows that formalistic modeling can be deployed to prove almost anything—but it hardly does radical economics proud.

Carnoy, Shearer, and Rumberger in *A New Social Contract*, and Miller and Tomaskovic-Devey in *Recapitalizing America* cover much the same ground, but more modestly and less ideologically. Carnoy and Rumberger are Stanford University economists; Shearer is an activist and city planner. Miller and Tomaskovic-Devey are sociologists at Boston University. Both groups of authors are associated more with the citizen action wing of the American left than the Marxian, and both are seeking to reclaim decentralization as a liberal theme.

Like Bowles and his colleagues, Carnoy et al. provide a skillful critique of Reaganomics, and suggest the limits of the neoliberal alternative. They agree that growth succumbed not to OPEC, but to the collapse of the New Deal social contract once American global dominance faltered. "The real saga of liberalism's demise lies in the attempts of business to reestablish high profit conditions . . . and the resistance to these attempts by groups that had benefited from the rise in wages and social welfare spending in the late 1960s and early 1970s." Neoliberalism of the Rohatyn-Hart-Thurow variety, they suggest, would do little to change power relationships, or to restore a social contract. They also mount a convincing defense of the public sector. Government, they show, has been a far better avenue of opportunity for women and minorities than private industry. Government employs a much higher percentage of black and women professionals, and at higher salaries than private industry. They want to revive government, not to centralize control in the state, but to enforce a decentralization of economic power.

MILLER AND Tomaskovic-Devey's book is the shortest of the three and in some ways the most tightly argued. "Recapitalization" is their word for the ideological claim that capital supply is the economic cure-all. In varying degrees, Reagan, Carter, and the more conservative advocates of "industrial policy" all fit this description. Miller and Tomaskovic-Devey are particularly good on the subject of trade. More than the other books, they heavily stress the domestic effects of international trade and capital mobility. The "real British disease," they suggest, is not the welfare state, but Britain's habit of exporting capital rather than investing in job-producing industry at home. America is following the same course. "Large U.S. firms have diversified internationally and are less dependent upon the internal health of the U.S. economy than U.S. workers." Finally, they have an excellent discussion of the sloppy use of the term "productivity." They show how "productivity decline" has been vastly oversold; they demonstrate that productivity is continuing to grow, and that the slowdown in the rate of growth is more the result of demographics and the shift to service jobs than any faltering of American labor or shortage of American capital. And they convincingly suggest why rapid productivity gains coupled with slow growth is a recipe for unemployment.

The encouraging aspect of all three books is that they suggest an intellectually resurgent democratic left; these programs of economic democratization and decentralization are plausible in their own terms. But as Carnoy and his colleagues write, perhaps with more irony than they intend, "[economic democracy] will work because it is rooted in the basic American values of participation, fairness, and efficiency. Its only drawback is political." Yes, indeed. In surveying the landscape for constituencies that might support a radical economics, all three sets of authors find only the usual suspects: a few citizen-action groups; an occasional left-liberal mayor; some scattered signs of militance in the labor movement; and more wishfully, the hope that blacks and economically conscious feminists are at last mobilizing around their economic interests. Miller and Tomaskovic-Devey are perhaps the most sober and realistic about political prospects. The United States, they acknowledge, lacks Europe's "left perspective and mobilization. The range of debate is exceedingly narrow here, as well as the range of government activity." And, quoting M.I.T. political scientist Walter Dean Burnham, they recall that only in the United States is business dominance of ideological possibility "effectively uncontested."

The American left, to be sure, confronts a closed circle of intellectual isolation, a scant political market for its wares, and timidity among its liberal allies. Still, these are serious books—intellectually and politically. It was Keynes who observed that "soon or late, it is ideas, not vested interests, which are dangerous for good or evil." The conservative resurgence began as an intellectual renaissance, not as a rally of corporate lobbyists. If ideas matter, as one must believe they do, then intellectual recapitalization is the most promising place to break into the circle.

BOB KUTTNER

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Swift: The Man, His Works, and the Age
Volume Three: Dean Swift
by Irvin Ehrenpreis

(Harvard University Press, 976 pp., $35)

"Swift haunts me: he is always just round the next corner." By these words Yeats meant the next Dublin street corner. From the bust on the wall in St. Patrick's Cathedral and "the greatest epitaph in history" to the Cathedral Close, Swift's Hospital, the Castle, the Liffey and beyond, Dublin is Swift's city as much as it is Joyce's (as Joyce too acknowledged). But Yeats also meant that "round the next corner" of his writing was the Dean, charged with savage indignation: the plain-speaker in rough tetrameters that Yeats used as a mask in his late poetry, the isolated prophet with a powerful devotion to justice and liberty. For the Irish people Swift combined the roles of Tom Paine and George Washington. In the *Drapier's Letters* he was the first Irishman of modern times to win a skirmish with the English masters, and in the fourth *Drapier's Letter* he declared in ringing cadences Ireland's nationhood, pointing toward the principle of complete independence. As Irvin Ehrenpreis puts it in his biography, Swift "raised" the issue of Wood's copper coinage "from the bleakness of one more chapter of British mistreatment of Ireland to be an illustration of our concept of liberty." Even in his lifetime, bells were rung and bonfires lit on his birthday and whenever he returned to Dublin. In his old age, when he was as aware of the Swift myth as Yeats would be, he informed Archbishop Boulter, the English primate of Ireland (Walpole's man), that if he, Swift, merely lifted a finger, the mob would tear Boulter to pieces.

Swift yearned for England. He insisted that his books be first published there and maintained the closest contact with its writers and politicians. Even as late as 1727, when English preferment became momentarily a possibility at the accession of George II, he considered a return. The English Swift, who had hated mobs, was the Swift of the first masterpieces, *A Tale of a Tub*, the *Bickerstaff Papers*, and *The Conduct of the Allies*: the Swift who was at the center of power, the intimate of Oxford and Bolingbroke, as well as of Pope, Congreve, Addison, Steele, Gay, and Arbuthnot. In old age he is supposed to have opened a copy of *A Tale of a Tub* and said, "What genius I had then!" But the *Tale*, for all its brilliance, remains a difficult work, the preserve of Nabokovian novelists and subtle literary scholars. (Its more accessible descendant was Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*.) The Irish Swift—in a situation hardly less perilous than Milton's after the Restoration, pursued by a hostile government that had imprisoned and exiled his friends—wrote the universal masterpieces, *Gulliver's Travels* and *A Modest Proposal*. Besides these, and the innumerable pamphlets on Irish politics and economics, he wrote the poems, "The Legion Club," the "Lady's Dressing Room," the "Verses on the Death of Dr. Swift," "On Poetry: A Rhapsody," and many more, in an unmediated popular style that anticipated Wordsworth's *Lyrical Ballads* and Yeats's Crazy Jane poems.

The English works had been coterie-oriented. The *Tale* was supremely elitist, looking out from a position of intellectual and moral superiority at a disintegrating world-of-words. Its power comes from the fact that Swift is impersonating one of the Grub Street hacks, and his impersonation of a loser already rings true: more than one aspect of Swift himself figures in the psychomachia of the *Tale*. The works of 1710-14, propaganda for the Oxford ministry, were based on an identification with England and with a ministry in power, and once again look out and downward to the threat of uncultivated outsiders. Cut off in Ireland, after the fall of Oxford and Bolingbroke, Swift was another poor Irishman, a dean never to be a bishop. The landed gentry who had been his recommended constituency in England were now the villains—often absentee landlords living in England, wracking their tenants, and turning cultivated land into pasture. No longer Whig-Tory but English-Irish and landlord-tenant, Swift's polarities brought him down on the side of (as he put it) "the shopkeepers, tradesmen, farmers, and common-people of Ireland." His audience was now the lower orders, reaching down to the illiterate. But the ultimate power of that most devastating of all his works, *A Modest Proposal*, lies in the fact that these lower orders were also his despair, not only the oppressed but Yahoos, and willing devourers of their own children. The Irish writings plumbed the depths of human experience in a way the English writings could not have.

Swift's last years in Ireland, from the fall of the Oxford ministry in 1714 to his death in 1745, are the subject of the third and final volume of Ehrenpreis's definitive biography. But Ireland was the thread on which Swift's life in the first two volumes was spun. Even Sir William Temple, who taught him his English sophistication and prose style, as well as his desire for living among the great, was an Irish connection. Swift was born in Ireland, spent eighteen of his first twenty-one years there, and except for lengthy stays in England between 1689 and 1714 (and two visits in 1726 and 1727) lived out the rest of his seventy-eight years in Ireland. The political writings of the English years hinged on his campaign to gain the First Fruits for the Irish clergy and contest the repeal of the Test Act, which would have returned dissenters to positions of power. It was in this context that the most universal of the English prose works, *An Argument Against Abolishing Christianity*, was written, expressing the frustration of an Irish clergyman in a country oblivious to his needs.

SIXTEEN YEARS have passed since Ehrenpreis's second volume appeared, but the third volume maintains the same virtues of sound and thorough scholarship, acute and elegant analysis of motives. If you want to understand exactly how the Church of Ireland hierarchy operated, how its higher and lower clergy related to each other, and how everything from a deanery down to Swift's own particular budget functioned, it is all here. In this densely elaborated background we lose Swift for pages or sections at a time, but, as in a Victorian novel, these matters always turn out in the end to have direct relevance to our hero's story. A Victorian

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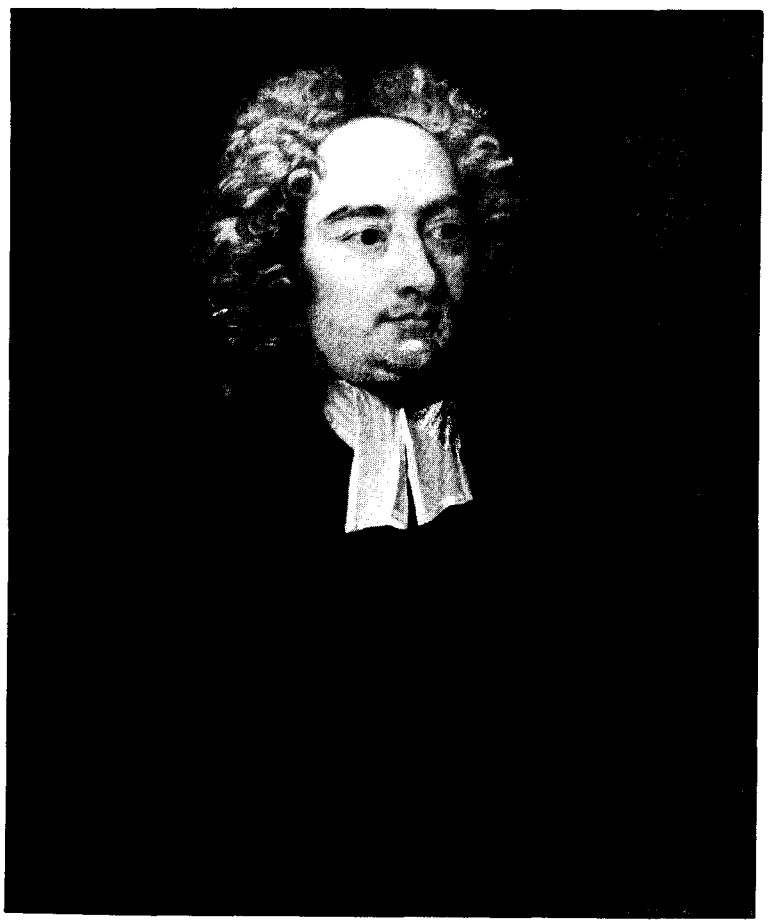
life-and-works is in fact what Ehrenpreis has written. When he reaches a literary text he stops and writes a literary essay (he analyzes motives better than poems). But in the political pamphlets of 1710-14, and above all in the stream of pamphlets that flowed from the deanery in Dublin, there is no distinguishing the works from the life. Ehrenpreis's chapters on the *Drapier's Letters* and Wood's Halfpence, the centerpiece of the volume, are brilliantly told, compelling as narrative and acute as criticism.

Swift's writing was defined by a need always to reach out into life. If a writer begins with the assumption, as Swift and his contemporaries did, that writing is rhetoric, that it must affect or persuade, that ideally it should change a reader, then a model for the greatest satire is not unreasonably the hoax in which effects can be traced beyond the printed page into various human reactions. Unsigned and pseudonymous pamphlets read as if they reported the real world, catching even the wariest reader in a satiric plot from which he can free himself only with the most self-enlightening wrench. The greatest such transaction, the *Drapier's Letters*, eventuated not in their printed text but in the boycott of Wood's coins by the Irish—a refusal to accept these coins parallel to the refusal of Londoners fifteen years earlier to accept Partridge's claims that he was still alive after Bickerstaff/Swift had prophesied his death and soberly reported its fulfillment. The Drapier's boycott was not the end of the story by any means. Next came the *Fourth Letter*, which took the matter far beyond the expectations of Swift's supporters up until then, dragging them along despite themselves into the larger and more dangerous issue of Irish independence from the English. The neatest of many twists was Swift's substitution of a mock presentment against the coinage to the Grand Jury that was convened to pass judgment on his own allegedly seditious pamphlet—which the jury happily proceeded to approve. Scenes of this sort were constantly being projected—and often realized—by the Swiftean text.

When complaints were voiced that George I was sending illiterate and corrupt English clergymen to Ireland to fill its bishoprics, "Swift said with a grave face, 'Ye are in the wrong to blame his Majesty before you know the truth. He sent us over very good and great men, but they were murdered by a parcel of highwaymen between Chester and London, who slipping on their gowns and cassocks here pretend to pass for bishops.' " Behind this, of course, is the joke that one never can blame the King for his acts, but only his ministers or agents. If the fantasy Swift projects here is for a moment believed, however, then its figurative truth is realized, just as for an instant the reader believes that the solution to the economic ills of the Irish *is* for the poor to sell their children to grace the dinner tables of the rich.



JONATHAN SWIFT, PAINTING BY CHARLES JERVAS (c. 1710)

The difficulty for a biographer of Swift is that with his kind of writing the boundary between fiction and truth is blurred even (or especially) in the more personal areas of his life: his literary hoaxes extended to the fabrications of his relationship with Esther Vanhomrigh (Vanessa) in his poem *Cadenus and Vanessa* and in his correspondence with her; and even more to the playful ironies of the *Journal to Stella* and the annual birthday poems he wrote to Esther Johnson, the woman who meant more to him than any other. It is around Stella that the myths of the Dean's marriage grew up and were still being repeated as recently as the 1960s. Ehrenpreis, resorting to a Freudian trope, subsumes these relationships under a general need that he detects running through Swift's life, to have a sexually titillating affair that does not require consummation; or to have a younger woman from whom he can keep some distance and who will presumably outlive him and so not desert him by dying as his father did (though alas, he almost always chose friends of both sexes who predeceased him). Stella, as Ehrenpreis shows, was herself more than that: the first and the subsequent model for all these other relationships.

A biographer of Swift has to reconcile the words of the greatest English ironist with his true feelings and with the "facts" as revealed by the records. Is it sufficient, as Ehrenpreis tends to do, to accept the opposite of what he says? Swift blames Lady Acheson or Stella, therefore he is praising her. When Ehrenpreis says of the familiar poems (to Stella, the Achesons, and others) that "Ridicule is an ironic revelation of tender feelings," he omits the further probability that much indirect aggression or hostility is also being expressed. For one thing, the mode that Swift developed in the satiric writings of this period is no longer accurately described as irony. It is a desperate, jocular, gallows humor that draws much more than the earlier irony on the hope-

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less wit of the Irish oral culture. It is based on a knowledge that defeat, death, and disintegration of the body are all with us, and that love is only protected by denials.

Ehrenpreis is not very sympathetic with the aspects of Swift that have made him most important to recent Swift scholars: the bottomless subversion, the anarchic energies, and the sympathy with the popular (Irish) subculture. Taking the Bank of Ireland pamphlets of 1720, Ehrenpreis speaks of their excesses and obsessions—how "the combination of money and bowels over-excited Swift" (such things, for Ehrenpreis, always "excite" Swift, as if sexually)—preferring "satire, which does not get out of hand," and commending *A Letter from a Lady in Town* because it "has its charm." "Charm" we may associate with Pope, never with Swift. Accordingly Ehrenpreis never allows Swift to be as outrageous as he was. (When he mentions Swift's account of the Tribnian scholars of "A Voyage to Laputa" who decode "a Sink" to signify "a C—t," Ehrenpreis reads the blank only as "court," characteristically failing to acknowledge the probable third option Swift leaves open to his readers.)

Ehrenpreis likes to compare Swift's strange, truncated, cast-off verses with Pope's incomparably polished poems, always to the advantage of the latter—poems, he says, of "a different order." Yet Swift's is an anti-poetry; he never believed, even in his English years, in the power of poetry or art to control and order, let alone to heal, as Pope did even in his *Dunciad*. Rather than contest Ehrenpreis's opinion that Pope's poetry is of a higher order than Swift's, I question the validity of using Pope as a standard of value throughout a biography of Swift. What Ehrenpreis does not grasp is that much of Swift's Irish poetry is written at a much lower level and for a much lower audience than Pope's, which was always directed to a small educated elite. Even when Swift does address his close friends he assumes a persona drawn from the travesty mode of Cotton's *Scarronides* and Butler's *Hudibras* in which Dido speaks in the diction of a fishwife. Whether addressing intimate friends or the "mob," he is practicing a popular mode related to Charivaris and Skimmingtons, those miming rituals of the subculture. The muffled ringing of St. Patrick's bells following the latest English depredation was both a Swiftean hoax and a subculture adaptation of the ruling-class ritual of state mourning.

For the popular dimension—indeed for a literary as opposed to biographical picture of Swift in Ireland—one must read alongside Ehrenpreis's biography the recent book of Carole Fabricant, *Swift's Landscape* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982), which brilliantly explores the topography of the Swiftean imagination. In a letter to Bolingbroke, for example, Swift tells how he built a wall around his garden:

> I built a wall five years ago, and when the masons played the knaves, nothing delighted me so much as to stand by while my servants threw down what was amiss: I have likewise seen a Monkey overthrow all the dishes and plates in a kitchen, merely for the pleasure of seeing them tumble and hearing the clatter they made in their fall. I wish you would invite me to such another entertainment. . . .

Ehrenpreis uses this passage, in the context of what else he can document of Swift and the wall, simply to show the care he takes to make sure it was well built (and "the delight that gardening . . . gave him"). This is true biographically and historically, but it overlooks Fabricant's point, which is the way Swift tells the story to Bolingbroke off in England (five years later), to emphasize his glee at the destruction, in a passage that ends with the famous words (quoted by Yeats) about dying "here in a rage, like a poisoned rat in a hole." The hole, of course, is Ireland, and the enclosure of the garden is both politically and aesthetically inimical. The man Swift probably did delight in gardening; but the Dean (itself a metaphor for not-Bishop) delighted equally in making tropes of the "rotten stones" and the knocking down of "what was amiss"—perhaps of any wall. Fabricant's interpretation, which is more fundamentally correct in terms of the Swiftean imagination, is the one we do not find in Ehrenpreis's account of the actual man who was there making sure the wall was securely built.

Ehrenpreis consistently emphasizes how "comfortable" Swift had it in his relationships with younger women and in his well-off Dublin deanship. And yet Swift himself constantly projects a much darker picture of both himself and Ireland. Fabricant leaves us with

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the open question, whether being Irish and in Ireland contributed to his way of seeing or whether "order was in some fundamental way alien to his mode of perceiving and locating himself in the world"—and he therefore gravitated toward Irish situations. Hugh Kenner's idea of "Irish Truth," a totally indeterminate thing, quicksand for a biographer, is always with us as we read through the letters, poems, documents, and records of Swift's life.

Ehrenpreis tells the story with a very determinate, Augustan style. It is indeed Swiftean to the point of often requiring two or three readings of a tortuously witty sentence of analysis. There are passages of brilliantly succinct and malicious observation, consciously following Pope's portrait of "Sporus" or Swift's of "Wharton." The peculiarity I remember from the earlier volumes is even more prominent in the last: the intrusion of the Ehrenpreis "I." Any biographer faces the problem of how to say, "This may have, probably, seems to have, or perhaps happened." Ehrenpreis's solution is consistently to say "I think" or "I believe" or "I suppose this happened." The manner, though denoting honesty and precision of a sort, is clumsy and becomes extremely odd with repetition: "I think she wrote these during the months before her sister's death. I assume that . . . ," and so on. The "I" introduces Ehrenpreis as another character—and sometimes a meddler, as when he quotes John Lyon that Swift admitted that his weakness in Greek "obliged him sometimes [I should say more often than not] to cast his eye on the left side of the leaf, where the Latin translation is generally printed." He sounds like Boswell correcting Johnson from the safe vantage of his desk. Like Boswell, Ehrenpreis may be the right biographer of his subject precisely because he is so different, so totally unlike his subject, holding him off for categorization as the King of Brobdingnag and his philosophers do Gulliver, the *lusus naturae*.

RONALD PAULSON

Ronald Paulson, who teaches English at Yale, is the author of *Representations of Revolution (1789-1820)* (Yale University Press).

OUR BODIES, OUR BURDENS

Femininity
by Susan Brownmiller

(Linden Press/Simon & Schuster, 270 pp., $14.95)

Just as American feminism has reached its lowest ebb, Susan Brownmiller has published a book that should have been a rallying point for a feminist revival. Not only has the E.R.A. failed repeatedly in recent years, but many women of the new generation repudiate the movement, and even its most shining examples, the middle-aged female stars of business and politics, begin interviews with "I'm not a feminist but . . ." What could be more needed now than a re-examination of female nature by one of the movement's intellectual founders?

Brownmiller's *Against Our Will* (1975), a history of rape in Western culture, was often a starting point for discussions in consciousness-raising groups, and many a feminist of the 1970s was made by a reading of her book. Thanks to the movement Brownmiller helped initiate, women have changed. If many women distrust feminism now, it is at least in part because they can afford to: a woman's right to work, to participate in politics and athletics, is no longer questioned by the majority of Americans. It has instead raised new problems in the home and the work place not susceptible to solution by the old militant feminism. But those who will look to Brownmiller for a new direction will find anything but that in *Femininity*. Women have changed, but Brownmiller has not changed along with them.

In its heyday in the 1970s, feminism promised to be a critical tool useful for analysis in all disciplines. Along with the women's movement, a new literary genre emerged as writers like Brownmiller, Millett, and Greer turned to history, sociology, and literary criticism with an energetic style that combined scholarship, memoir, and manifesto. Their words rang with the exhilaration of injustices uncovered, deceptions exposed—and what they wrote about was what women talked about. In those days, women seemed to find a perverse pleasure in hearing the worst about themselves. It was as if the mere discovery of abuse could correct it (though, more likely, women simply had not yet gathered enough strength to transcend the masochistic nature that feminist writers were so busy proving Western culture had forced on them).

But like many critical disciplines, feminism has proved to be better at saying what went wrong than at offering a practical program for change once its converts were ready for one. In recent years its writers have run out of words. In *Outrageous Acts and Everyday Rebellions*, Gloria Steinem simply reprinted the old ones. Alice Walker and Betty Friedan have tried inventing new ones—"womanism," "the second stage"—that don't catch on. And now Brownmiller publishes *Femininity*, a book that shows no awareness of the changed self-image of women readers

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(as a friend of mine put it, "I'm tired of reading about how I've been screwed over"), or of the new movement, spreading from feminist academic circles through the writing of psychologists Nancy Chodorow and Carol Gilligan, that celebrates the female spirit as distinct and powerful in its own right. Sadly, Brownmiller's only concern is with the old image of abused womanhood that fascinated both female writers and readers of the 1970s.

To Brownmiller, femininity is nothing so straightforward—or so challenging to the writer—as the definition in my Webster's: "the quality or nature of the female sex; womanliness." "Femininity, in essence," she writes in her prologue, "is a romantic sentiment, a nostalgic tradition of imposed limitations. Even as it hurries forward in the 1980s, putting on lipstick and high heels to appear well-dressed, it trips on the ruffled petticoats of an era gone by." Femininity is what's on the outside; Brownmiller doesn't concern herself with the inside.

In each of eight chapters, Brownmiller catalogues the abuses women have historically subjected different parts of their bodies to in the name of femininity. Many of these are tales we've heard before. "Body" includes long passages on foot-binding and obsessive dieting; "Hair" replays the history of the flapper's bob; "Clothes" mourns the failure of the bloomer and the continuing tradition of the veil. But there are insights as well: discussing the advent of the brassiere, Brownmiller remarks on the insidious way in which the language of lingerie advertisements "struck at the heart of feminine insecurity—the fear of not being supported and protected, not only socially and economically but in a vulnerable aspect of bodily shape." And in her chapter on "Movement," she calls up the feeling of relief at simply being normal that most women experience regularly but rarely acknowledge: "What a stroke of good fortune that my basic equipment is right for the part. What anatomical dumb luck, what a happy accident of genetics, that my physical characteristics fall within the idealized norm. Suppose my shoulders were broader or my fingers were stubby?" It is in passages like these that Brownmiller's distress at the persistence of traditional femininity seems most convincing.

COMING:

Stefan Kanfer
on the
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YET *Femininity* is infected with a tone of nostalgia and defeat that never entered Brownmiller's previous writing, and that ultimately undermines her subject here. Each chapter is capped off with a personal, often bitter, and always wistful reprimand to those "backsliders" who have betrayed the advances against femininity that the women's movement made during the 1970s. Brownmiller's friends who dare to trade in pants for skirts, to pull their makeup kits out of their dresser drawers, bear the burden of history here, their errors of style as serious as a change of heart on abortion or the E.R.A. Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor's short-skirted robes, specially altered to show she is wearing a dress, seem as dire an offense against feminism as her voting record.

But Brownmiller is too much the feminist to blame women, the victims of femininity. The enemy here, as it was in so much feminist writing of the 1970s, is man and the culture he made. She traces the beginning of femininity back to the feminist's version of original sin: the time in prehistory when roving bands of male hunters overthrew the fertility goddesses of matriarchal Mesopotamia and replaced them with their own bellicose male gods. From then on femininity lost any connotation of strength and became nothing more than the pathetic attempts of women to win over men with shows of weakness, painting their faces, shaving their legs, binding their feet, "vying for attention," writes Brownmiller, "as a means of survival."

Yet this attractively simple view of history and culture scarcely holds up. It is easy enough to substitute similar restrictions on men and begin feeling just as sorry for women's supposed oppressors. Gray flannel suits, ties knotted at the throat, and clean-shaven chins are scarcely the emblems of liberated manhood—rather the reverse, the symbols of another kind of repression entirely.

But then, liberation of the sexes is not what Brownmiller is after here. Sadly for this book on female nature, Brownmiller has retained the hard-line feminist's suspicion of what she calls "sexual dimorphism." Perhaps femininity's greatest evil, according to Brownmiller, is its insistence on a feminine difference. Just when the most pressing questions of the post-feminist era seem to be arising from the search for authentic gender distinctions (how else can the best-selling *Real Men* and *Real Women* books be explained?), Brownmiller clings to the old equation of sexual equality and androgyny. "To satisfy a societal need for sexual clarification," she writes,

> and to justify second-class status, an emblematic constellation of inner traits, as well as their outward manifestations, have been put forward historically . . . as proof of the "different" feminine nature.

It follows then, in Brownmiller's scheme, that all trappings of femininity are false, and that the trappings themselves are symbols of a fundamentally violent relation between the sexes in Western culture. The adoring husband who dresses his wife in mink and pearls is only the socially sanctioned version of the rapist. Difference can only mean vulnerability in women and abusive power in men.

BUT what is woman in Brownmiller's scheme? One can only extrapolate: she is whatever hides beneath the makeup and those bothersome flowing locks. What should women strive for? In *Femininity*, as in the old feminism, anything marked as male is presumed to be inherently freer, therefore desirable. "Functional clothing is a masculine privilege," Brownmiller writes with envy, "and practicality is a masculine virtue." Pants still represent mobility; cropped hair, liberation. Like so many feminists of the 1970s, Brownmiller is singing the most sexist of all tunes: why can't a woman be more like a man?

Women have, despite recent political setbacks, despite continued inequities in opportunity and pay, achieved enough dignity in recent decades that a simple recital of the indignities of the past—a history we've heard many times before *Femininity*—can only sadden readers with its reminder of women's former weakness. Brownmiller is

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right to mourn the passing of the years of feminist orthodoxy, when a woman could feel a sense of victory simply by showing up at a cocktail party in slacks. The correct feminist stance is no longer clear. As women have entered the male world of work and privilege, our compromises have been great, our transformation from vulnerable playmate to vigorous team player far from complete. Yet it is precisely because we need to learn how to live with the ambiguity of transition—with our gains and our losses, and with our growing awareness that femininity merits redefinition rather than rejection—that women will no longer be stirred by a simpleminded feminism that draws its battle lines at the hem. Just when we most need new ideas, new goals, new words, Brownmiller has given us a feminism as out-moded as the femininity she writes about.

MEGAN MARSHALL

Megan Marshall is the author of *The Cost of Loving: Women and the New Fear of Intimacy*, to be published by G. P. Putnam's in April.

MEASURE FOR MEASURE

A Calculating People: The Spread of Numeracy in Early America by Patricia Cline Cohen

(University of Chicago Press, 271 pp., $22)

Calculation, as a routine method of evaluating the world, comes with modern societies. The growth of science, capitalism, and the modern state would scarcely have been possible without the development of quantitative reasoning and devices for measurement, accounting, and statistics. And since people are needed who can understand or at least operate the apparatus of rational management, the social demands for individual competence have grown to include quantitative skills.

Quantification, however, has an influence that goes beyond what might be thought strictly necessary for modern institutions. The effects on our culture and thought are pervasive. The experience of time, distance, and temperature cannot now easily be separated from the numerical terms we use to measure them. Much of the news of the world and the weather comes in statistics; and it is quite impossible even to follow sports without some facility with numbers. There is hardly a better example of the statistical mind than a devoted baseball fan, able to rattle off players' batting averages, R.B.I.'s, stolen bases, lifetime hits, won-lost records, earned-run averages, and current league standings, among many other facts. And such obsessive statistical record-keeping only reflects general practice. At work and school as well as in games, we keep score on ourselves (or others keep scores on us), measuring and testing our bodies, personalities, and performance. Numbers are the very model of modern facts. They seem superior in objective reality to "mere" words for the same reason Susan Sontag cites in suggesting why photography, in contrast to painting, so strongly compels belief: a number, like a photograph, seems a piece of reality, rather than an interpretation of it. However much we may distrust statistics or be skeptical of their real significance, we expect to be served our customary diet of numbers, to be kept up to date with the latest swing in the unemployment rate, the consumer price index, or the Presidents' standings in the polls.

How quantification emerged in American culture is the subject of this exceptionally well-crafted book by a young historian, Patricia Cline Cohen. She actually has two related histories to tell. One is the progress of a skill, which in the past quarter-century has come to be called numeracy (a coinage meant, of course, to suggest a direct parallel with literacy and to endow quantitative skills with co-equal status). The other is the rise of a new cultural propensity: the expansion of what Cohen calls "the domain of number," as things previously conceived of in qualitative terms have become subject to quantification. If the spread of numeracy belongs to the history of human competence, the expanding domain of number belongs to the history of cultural ideals and enthusiasms: the growing commitment to the ideal of objectivity and the spreading rationalization of modern life.

Cohen says her work originated when she noticed that in the 1820s and 1830s there appeared a variety of popular publications with statistics, such as almanacs and gazetteers, that previously had been rare. (Those were also the decades when the term "statistics" acquired its present meaning; previously, "statistical" referred to any information about a state, regardless of whether or not it was numerical.) The same years witnessed a significant expansion of primary education in arithmetic and a virtual revolution in the methods of instruction. But rather than study those developments alone, she asked what had impeded numeracy and quantification earlier. Consequently, she begins her account with the development of numerical reasoning in Britain in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the use of statistics in British colonial management, and the rise in popular understanding of numbers among Americans in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. How much did the British and early Americans make use of numbers in the running of their enterprises and governments? To what extent were public controversies conducted in the language of numbers? Exploring such questions, Cohen makes creative use of intelligently selected developments and a wide range of sources in the histories of business, medicine, education, statistics, and politics through the mid-nineteenth century.

THERE IS, of course, a ready-made materialist explanation for the problem Cohen raises: that capitalism brought about a calculating mentality. The bourgeoisie, wrote Marx and Engels, drowned all sentimentality and religious enthusiasm in "the icy waters of egotistical calculation." This is a view by no means confined to Marxists. The conservative Joseph Schumpeter, for example, argued that the economy was the "matrix of logic" and that capitalism could take credit—proudly—for increasingly quantitative habits of thought. For once "defined and quanti-

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Clayfeld's Glove

Clayfeld believed indulging in one's whims
improved the circulation
of despondent blood; whims, the sculptor in him
could persuade himself,
counted as a form of inspiration.
One day, browsing
in a sports equipment store, he noticed how
the baseball gloves had changed,
how large the webbing had become, and he decided
he would fly to Arizona
where his mother lived to see if she had stored
the yellow baseball glove
Clayfeld had oiled and pounded into shape
when he was still a boy.
"Are you all right?" the salesman asked,
and Clayfeld knew
he must have blushed to recollect the time
he'd grabbed his baseball glove
to hide his private parts that night
his mother, without warning,
walked into his room. He thought maybe he'd sculpt
a naked statue of himself—
a true artistic first: a baseball glove where once
a fig leaf would have been.
Clayfeld awoke in Arizona to the smell
of lamb chops sizzling
which his mother served him with his eggs
just as she used to do
when he was lifting weights to put some muscle
on his skinny frame.
"Everything I've kept of yours," she said,
"is packed away in boxes
chronologically and stacked in the garage."
Shoes, hair clippings, letters,
layer after layer, like excavations
from an ancient Jericho,
waited to be exhumed—and then, behold!
he found a baseball glove,
but one too skimpy to have been his own.
Maybe, he thought, this was
his father's glove; maybe mother had mistaken
father's glove for his?
Another statue he might sculpt appeared
in Clayfeld's mind: his father, poised
in naked grandeur just as Michelangelo
conceived his David,
sling-shot stone in hand, prepared himself
to backhand any grounder
that might yield the rally-killing double play.
"I don't know how
this glove could be your father's,"
Clayfeld's mother scolded him,
and then it all came swirling back to her:
"You couldn't have been more
than four or five," she said; "that spring your father
took you out to have a catch
when he had finished with his chores—and I
mean every single day!
I'd stand there in the doorway shouting
'Dinner will get spoiled
unless the two of you come in right now!'
but nothing I could threaten
seemed to do much good. And so one evening
after you had muddied up
the living room as usual, I boiled the glove,
piled mashed potatoes
neatly in the pocket, sprinkled it
with parsley, squeezed into
my tightest bathing suit, my highest heels,
and sashayed in
to score my point." A statue of his mother
formed in Clayfeld's mind,
and then Clayfeld recalled his father's words
before he tucked him
into bed that night: "From now on, son,
we'll have to end
our catch on time." It had begun to rain.
He saw the red buds
of the maple tree outside his room
reflect his window lamp.
His father handed him a sandwich
he had sneaked upstairs
inside his baseball cap. "I'll bet you didn't know
that I could cook," he said.
Now in this Arizona noon, those open boxes
blazing in the entryway
of the garage, the lines in Clayfeld's mother's face
seemed smoothed out by the sun.
"Yes, everything will be put back exactly
in its place," he promised her.
But Clayfeld wondered if his grief would ever end.
Maybe if he had children
of his own? He thought someday he'd do
his father's bust—he'd catch the way
he held his head like David looking past his shoulder
through the empty light
without his body there to trouble him.

Robert Pack

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fied" in the economy, the rational habit of mind started

> upon its conqueror's career subjugating—rationalizing—man's tools and philosophies, his medical practice, his picture of the cosmos, his outlook on life, everything in fact including his concepts of beauty and justice and his spiritual ambitions.

It would be wrong to say that Cohen's research disproves this position; indeed, she shows quite clearly that the development of commerce was a major impetus to the adoption of numerical thinking. But she finds more to the story. An independent interest in calculation comes from what she sees as a search for order and regularity in the revolutionary circumstances of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Quantification, she observes, provided a satisfaction in an unruly world that went beyond any strictly rational, economic cause.

Moreover, though commerce was an impetus, it was ironically also an impediment to the spread of numeracy. Arithmetic was so widely understood as a commercial skill that it was long considered inappropriate for either general or elite education. Until the early nineteenth century, arrangements typically had to be made for private tutorials or after-hours instruction by a schoolmaster. Furthermore, the texts in arithmetic were so thoroughly dedicated to commercial applications that general principles were ill understood and ill taught. The same mathematical operation would be presented as one rule for pounds and shillings, another rule for ounces and quarts. Due to the plethora of rules that needed to be memorized, arithmetic was thought to be extremely difficult to learn—and under those circumstances, it was. Children younger than ten or twelve were considered incapable of doing arithmetic. When first taught at Harvard or Yale in the 1700s, arithmetic was introduced as a subject for seniors.

At that time, Cohen says, Americans were not yet the "calculating people" they became in the nineteenth century. The phrase itself she takes from an English traveler of the 1830s, Thomas Hamilton, who had an evident distaste for Americans' arithmetical habit of mind. (He denounced Philadelphia as a "city laid down by square and rule, a sort of habitable problem,—a mathematical infringement on the rights of individual eccentricity,—a rigid and prosaic despotism of right angles and parallelograms.") What promoted a quantifying mentality, in addition to commercial preoccupations, was, curiously enough, the democratic culture of early American society. When public education was expanded in the early nineteenth century, reformers sought to devise ways to improve and simplify the teaching of arithmetic to make it more easily accessible. Democratic commitments were also at work in the introduction of the decimal system in the currency. Thomas Jefferson, who led the effort, argued for the decimal system on the grounds that it would help ordinary people manage their financial affairs. (Jefferson emerges from the book as an ardent practitioner of quantification as well as its spokesman: Cohen says that he kept such detailed records of his own finances that they would easily withstand an I.R.S. audit today.)

THE GROWTH of official statistical inquiry in the United States also reflected much the same commitments. Censuses have an ancient history, but their original purpose was to register people and their possessions, not to count them. Conducted irregularly, they were traditionally feared as a form of state surveillance and as an aid to enforcement of taxation and conscription. Although some residues of suspicion persisted in the United States, the American Constitution called for a census every ten years for apportionment of the House of Representatives. The United States became the first country to adopt a census as a regular practice, and representation gave Americans an interest in being counted.

The rise of quantitative thinking in the nineteenth century also signaled a more subtle shift in democratic thought. In the early years of the Republic, Congress was divided over whether to extend government statistical inquiries beyond the bare requirement of an enumeration. Supporters of broadened inquiry thought such information would help legislators serve their constituents. They conceived of society as consisting of diverse and competing groups, and they thought of politics as a sphere of interests. The opponents viewed the object of government as the pursuit of an undifferentiated common good; for them, politics was a sphere of virtue, and empirical investigation was irrelevant. By the mid-nineteenth century, as "the greatest good for the greatest number" became a political axiom, empirical inquiry won increasing support. The growing scope of the census thus reflected the triumph of a liberal and pluralist conception of the democratic state.

Of course, with the prestige of numbers has come an appetite for any statistics, no matter how specious. In this regard, the cultural enthusiasm for quantification is really at odds with numeracy, which if properly conceived ought to include the ability not only to use numbers, but also to recognize their misuse. The development of a critical understanding of the limits of data is the unexpected subject of Cohen's final episode: the fiasco of the 1840 census. Until that time, statistics had been a clerical and unreflective activity. However, in the 1830s, there began to form an incipient group of professional statisticians. When the 1840 census showed higher rates of insanity among free blacks in the North than among slaves in the South, the physician Edward Jarvis, one of the early leaders of the American Statistical Association, looked into the census returns and found that many of the allegedly insane blacks were reported in towns and households that had no blacks at all. Under the southerner John C. Calhoun, the State Department, then in charge of the census, refused to admit the error, but the

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"IT IS NOW DAWNING on the Enlightened Ones that government policy has been promoting the breakup of black families. It was a decade ago that George Gilder wrote elegantly that to make the black female dependent on the state was to make the black male useless. For his pains, a feminist group named him Pig of the Year. It's heartening that the people who have been so 'open to new ideas' are beginning to appreciate old ideas."

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controversy proved a milestone in the development of a more critical and professional view of statistics. (Actually, the findings about insanity may not have had a political origin. The design of the census forms, Cohen shows, probably led to the misclassification throughout the country of many senile whites as insane blacks; and the small total population of blacks in the North resulted in apparently higher rates of insanity among free blacks.)

Cohen's own sensitivity to the risks and limits of quantification is the source of a marvelous internal irony in the book. In her introduction, as part of a sensible general discussion of numeracy, she notes that the concept is too poorly defined to be quantified; there is no consensus about the level of deficiency that constitutes innumeracy. Is someone innumerate who cannot count beyond twenty? who cannot use written symbols? who has not mastered some level of arithmetic, algebra, or geometry? The "indeterminate definition of the term and the lack of systematic historical evidence," she writes, made it impossible to construct a quantitative index of numeracy. We should be grateful for her decision. A monograph on numeracy rates would have been much less interesting—and probably less accurate—than the illuminating and richly detailed narrative she has written.

PAUL STARR

Paul Starr, who teaches sociology at Harvard, is the author of *The Social Transformation of American Medicine* (Basic).

POETRY'S PROTECTOR

Khodasevich: His Life and Art
by David M. Bethea

(Princeton University Press, 380 pp., $27.50)

Vladislav Khodasevich (ho-da-SAY-vich: a rasping initial, two indistinct vowels, loud penult, mumbled ultima) lived from 1886 to 1939. For a baker's dozen of those years, 1914 to 1927, he wrote what are indisputably some of the greatest Russian poems of our time. In the next dozen years before his death (in Paris, from cancer) he endured the exiled poet's ultimate nightmare, the poetic muteness arising, in his case, out of so many complex forms of loss that it is best put symbolically: the death of his muse. He continued to write (he never earned his living by any other means), but in prose. Still, had he never written a line of verse, he would be a considerable figure in the history of modern Russian letters for his memoirs and criticism, the latter exemplified by masterful studies of Pushkin and Derzhavin.

Even for a Russian émigré, a type not especially famous for sweet equability of temper, Khodasevich could be uncommonly disputatious and tetchy. But behind the verbal mayhem and malice in some of his poems and critical articles there would appear to have been an ultimately noble motivation, for he was driven by an imperious literary conscience and saw himself, not without reason, as a guardian of the ideals stemming from Derzhavin and Pushkin, with whom he largely identified and of whose heritage he has every right to be considered the conservator in exile. In his now foreclosed homeland, the literary situation was dominated by Mayakovsky and other spectacular frauds, and was therefore hopeless; but even in the frenetically active Russian literary communities in Berlin and Paris there was, for all their relative freedom, a sad falling away from authentic native traditions and flirtatious dallying with any passing European fashion. When he was not savagely amused at this spectacle—and he enlarged the meaning of the word *irony* in Russian poetry—he fell into the blackest despair. Arbiter, preceptor, and scourge, Khodasevich was often hated and mocked by his fellow exiles, who nevertheless continued helplessly to respect him as something like Faulkner's Miss Emily—"a tradition, a duty, and a care; a sort of hereditary obligation."

One of the sources of reproach against Khodasevich was his own poetry, which was decried as too unadorned, too old-fashioned, too obviously a *calque* of Pushkin. In many quarters that attitude has persisted even today and is a part of what Mandelstam, in 1924, declared to be the "monstrous ingratitude" shown this poet. Khodasevich has at last, however, found a worthy champion in David Bethea, whose book, one of the finest American contributions to Russian literary scholarship that I have ever seen, massively and authoritatively redresses the decades of wrong done his subject.

On the primary level of semantic content many of Khodasevich's best poems are indeed seemingly plain, but one might say of them what Christian Metz, the philosopher of film, said of the motion picture—that they are difficult to explain because they are easy to understand. Something like this oxymoron must have often been in David Bethea's mind as he deftly and painstakingly peeled away the layers of "easy" surface to reveal the unsuspected beauties and terrors beneath it. Practically all of Khodasevich's greatest poems are reprinted here, both in Russian and in translation, and most of them in full. Since the English versions convey only the literal sense (albeit with great accuracy), it is the fault of no one here on earth that the reader desirous of experiencing the poetry must somehow contrive to read the Cyrillic original. The commentaries—full, unobtrusive, frequently ingenious—do all that can be done to compensate for the lack of Russian.

Bethea is that rarity amongst American specialists in Russian literature (who, because of the usual lateness of their vocation, must play a lifelong game of catch-up simply to master their own field, forsaking all others): one who is also at home in the literature of his own language and of Europe, ancient and modern. The peculiar qualities of Khodasevich are made intelligible by the ease and cogency with which Bethea is able to set them in the context of cultures more familiar than the Russian.

He also writes with clarity and grace. I must say, however, that he seems immoderately fond of conspicuous diction: *muliebrile*, *vespertine*, *hiemal*, *accidie*,

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ictic, abulia, syzygial, and so on. The reader finally winces to see a plain swallow arrive, knowing that it must be the harbinger of *herundine*, and that if winter comes, *hiemal* cannot be far behind. Like most of the products of this publisher, *Khodasevich* is a physically handsome object, a source of visual and tactile pleasure. Two little cavils. The parentheses in the generally elegant typeface are among the most disobliging typographic marks ever to be left on paper. And, in a text all but free of misprints, the omission of a comma in one of Wallace Stevens's greatest lines has probably ruined it for me forever: "Deer walk upon our mountains and the quail."

A word about two predecessors of Bethea. These are Vladimir Nabokov, whose favorite contemporary poet Khodasevich was and who took him as the model for Koncheev, the émigré Russian poet at the center of one of his greatest novels, *The Gift* (the heroine of which, as Nabokov himself said, is Russian literature). Nabokov composed chess problems with the obvious solutions (to entrap philistines) masking the true solutions for the delight of the elect; he must have enjoyed the sight of those fellow émigrés who despised Khodasevich for the ease with which they imagined they had understood him. Bethea credits Nabokov's enthusiasm for kindling his own.

The other is Nina Berberova, author of one of the great Russian autobiographies of this century, *The Italics are Mine*, a source gratefully acknowledged by Bethea. She was for some ten years wife to Khodasevich, retained a tender affection for him even after they had broken up, and, in a convenant with his memory, did more than anyone else physically to preserve the literary remains in archives and to edit and publish the poems, expecting, no doubt, with her usual optimism, that the right man would one day turn up. He has. To these custodians of their heritage, and to David Bethea's splendid fulfillment of the destiny that they helped prepare for him, all who love the literature of Russia owe an enormous debt.

CLARENCE BROWN

Clarence Brown, who teaches Russian and comparative literature at Princeton, is the author of *Mandelstam* (Cambridge University Press), among other books.

THE MAN WHO LOVED WOMEN

Balanchine's Ballerinas: Conversations With The Muses by Robert Tracy, with Sharon DeLano

(Linden Press/Simon & Schuster, 192 pp., $24.95)

Balanchine was notoriously terse when commenting on his ballets. Like most great artists, he was content to let his creations speak for themselves, and for him. He soon learned never to say much to those leeches of journalism, the interviewers assigned to the arts; they always asked about his five ballerina wives (only four, actually) and they usually twisted his comments into whatever form their editors preferred. The more high-flown their questions, the more earthbound his response. Particularly treasurable was a session with the inescapable John Gruen at his most fulsome. Gruen floated a breathless request for the secret of his genius on a torrent of adjectives. Balanchine drily responded: "You must know your *metier*—like a cook." Such prosaic concision did more than indulge his wicked delight at being in command of any situation. Applied to his ballets, it shrewdly left ample room for his growing audience of intellectuals to speculate, analyze, and fantasize about the rarefied diversion he provided. These admirers knew that choreographic jargon could not account for the delight, the awe felt at New York City Ballet performances of *Four Temperaments* or *Agon*, *Concerto Barocco* or *Symphony in C*. Out of gratitude as well as curiosity, they longed to know more about the man and his methods. Their longing has acquired added poignance now that the man has died.

This chicly produced collection of interviews reduces that longing somewhat while creating aches of another kind. Robert Tracy—no journalist but a dancer—had the excellent idea of picking the brains of the women who starred or danced in Balanchine premieres. Unfortunately, two prominent muses, Vera Zorina and Tanaquil Le Clercq (both ex-wives), refused to cooperate. Meanwhile editorial colleagues like designer Bob Ciano and portrait photographer Shonna Valeska proved all too generous with outré ideas. The interview with Allegra Kent is a notable casualty of their assistance. After Ciano finishes indulging his delight in blankness elsewhere and clearing space for Valeska's photo of Kent sprawled like a Beardsleyesque Baby Snooks on a sofa, there is room for only ten minutes of recollection from this intelligent dancer. We would have been better served had Kent been given the pages devoted to 19-year-old Darci Kistler. Though she never had a Balanchine ballet made on her, Kistler was widely hailed as his last discovery; so here she is, a buoyant California girl, with a Valeska close-up of her bare feet in first position spread across the top of two pages, and a full-page photo of her with her teacher at the School of American Ballet, the great Alexandra Danilova, concluding the

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volume. Since Danilova, radiant in a dignified Valeska portrait, witty and perceptive in conversation, had opened the book, one can safely presume that editorial notions of symmetry prevailed over mere content.

Historical record is also poorly served by some photos that illustrate each ballerina's career. Surely if anyone can be said to "own a Balanchine role," Violette Verdy had the key to "Emeralds" and *Liebeslieder Waltzes*; the former sorely lacked her radiant hauteur and perfumed nuance when N.Y.C.B. revived it last November, and the latter has never been done there since she left. Neither work is pictured in Verdy's chapter. Still, having so many of the muses' photos together in one volume is instructive, for it shows the folly of all that journalese about "the Balanchine ballerina" being a breed apart, as distinctive as a borzoi. Anyone with eyes to see can tell that Kay Mazzo and Patricia McBride are quite different from Mary Ellen Moylan and Diana Adams, yet masterpieces were made on all of them. As Verdy said, he "needed a gallery of dancers because he had within him so many possibilities. He needs differences between dancers." Such multiplicity will never do for those who need simplicities like "the Balanchine ballerina." Pinned down like a butterfly in that manner, genius survives every bit as well.

Tracy generally does a good job at presenting the scope of Balanchine. Zorina's absence causes his work on Broadway and in Hollywood to be scanted—Goldwyn and Paramount are not even mentioned in the chronology—but Tracy misses little in his introductory notes to each section. He doesn't credit B. H. Haggin for his long critical support, but he justly debits John Martin for his blindly willful, jingoistically biased opposition to Balanchine's "Riviera aesthetics" in *The New York Times*. Often Tracy captures the essence of an event with a phrase, as when he sums up N.Y.C.B.'s 1972 Stravinsky Festival, where Balanchine produced three masterpieces and Robbins none, with: "Stravinsky was honored and Balanchine vindicated." His questions are informed, and the answers, with every lady's personal style intact, are often treasurable.

Each of our muses agree that Balanchine discovered unsuspected potential in her and developed it with extraordinary patience, efficiency, and creativity. Even those whose professional association eventually soured still cherish the honor he bestowed upon them. Differences emerge only in the testimony of the great Russian ladies, with their heady memories of St. Petersburg and Paris, Diaghilev and Goleizovsky (a Moscow avant-gardiste who inspired the young Balanchivadze). Decades after the fact, they still coquettishly dispute who inspired him most. The late Felia Doubrovska, his Siren in *Prodigal Son* (1929), is a bit more helpful when she recalls how Diaghilev scolded her for betraying emotion while dancing *Apollon Musagète* (as *Apollo* was then called). She says, "I think Balanchine learned from Diaghilev that being modern is being cool. No feeling." She has pointed out a stylistic consistency that Balanchine, for all his protean invention, maintained so steadily that it becomes a virtual leitmotif of the book. Merrill Ashley, fifty years after Doubrovska, says, "The main correction I get now is, 'Don't look at your partner. You're not in love with him. Just dance.' " Kistler, about to debut in N.Y.C.B.'s *Swan Lake*, is told: "Don't emote. Listening to the music will put you in the mood." Rehearsing *Robert Schumann's Davidsbündlertänze*, in which the composer's insanity is vividly depicted, Balanchine kept the emotional thermostat turned so low he never told his four couples anything about Robert or Clara—and certainly nothing about Schumann's duo alter ego, Florestan and Eusebius—and never brought them together for a rehearsal until just before the premiere.

The dwindling coterie of Balanchine haters insists that such "coldness" diminishes the man and his ballets. Close attention to these interviews and the N.Y.C.B. performances proves the opposite. "Restraint" is a more accurate term for his style. He preferred understatement because he had supreme faith in the music and in his ability to enhance it. The neutrality of City Ballet style also reveals a shrewd understanding of audience psychology. It permits patrons with opposing reactions to savor the same ballet. Those who need no "meaning" to enjoy the abstract mesh-

THE NEW REPUBLIC'S BEST BOOKS

Following is a list of books TNR *has recently reviewed and recommends.*

Politics in the Ancient World by M. I. Finley (Cambridge University Press). This skillful study examines the nature of political participation in the polis. (Reviewed 12/12/83)

Vladimir Tatlin and the Russian Avant-Garde by John Milner (Yale University Press). A pioneering study of the Russian constructivist's diverse work in its revolutionary context. (11/7/83)

Israel in the Mind of America by Peter Grose (Knopf). An important and thorough survey of American perceptions of Jews, at home and abroad, from colonial times to the present. (12/31/83)

Finest Hour: Winston Churchill 1939-1941 by Martin Gilbert (Houghton Mifflin). A rare and vast biographical undertaking, this volume vividly treats the leader's most dramatic years. (12/5/83)

Louis Armstrong: American Genius by James Lincoln Collier (Oxford University Press). A full and perceptive portrait, which includes learned discussions of his music. (1/30/84)

Midsummer by Derek Walcott (Farrar, Straus & Giroux). A masterful fifty-four-poem sequence, which establishes the poet's place at the center of current English poetry. (1/23/84)

The Life and Times of Michael K. by J. M. Coetzee (Viking). An eloquent story of an outcast in South Africa. (12/19/83)

The Aeneid by Virgil, translated by Robert Fitzgerald (Random House). A new and authoritative translation of the Roman epic. (11/28/83)

Time After Time by Molly Keane (Knopf). A darkly comic story of revenge among the Irish gentry. (1/30/84)

Stones for Ibarra by Harriet Doerr (Viking). A strikingly crafted first novel that tells fateful tales of life and death in a remote Mexican village. (1/30/84)

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ing of music with steps and line can revel in a collaboration of, say, Tchaikovsky and Mr. B. However the very rightness of this meshing can inspire others to turn the dancers into "actors"—to construct their own scenarios where the ballerina does love her partner, if they wish—for there is no official plot to prevent them. Neither audience could find equal satisfaction at American Ballet Theatre, where management favors a style so insistently "hard sell" that one expects to find a price list inserted in the playbill.

RESTRAINT IS also what a sensitive artist employs when he reveals himself in his art. The image of Balanchine as some Georgian icicle cannot survive a revelation in Tracy's interview with Suzanne Farrell, his Muse *Assoluta* for almost twenty years. Her grandeur and daring inspired him to expand his style, beginning with *Meditation* (1963), the first work conceived on her. It is an uncharacteristically romantic pas de deux to Tchaikovsky in which she appears like a vision to a bereft partner, occasionally slips wraith-like from his arms and finally vanishes into the darkness from which she emerged. Of all the several Balanchine pas de deux in which a man seems to seek solace or inspiration from a woman, *Meditation* is uniquely intense. He was 59 when he created it. He never discussed "meaning" with Farrell, but she did later learn about an instruction given her partner, Jacques d'Amboise: he must always put some gray in his hair before a performance. Not a streak, not a wig—just some gray.

Surely the great male dancers who worked with Balanchine also recall instructions and asides as meaningful as the remark to D'Amboise. They deserve their turn, too. After all, as Maria Tallchief says, "He's done some of his best ballets for men—*Apollo*, *Orpheus*. . . ." Perhaps, with more sober editorial collaborators, Tracy can compile a worthier brother volume, and we can learn if this great and fascinating artist revealed, chatting man to man, secrets he would never do in conversation with a muse.

HARRIS GREEN

Harris Green is a New York City editor who frequently writes on music, theater, and dance.

MYSTERIES

THE NEW REPUBLIC launched this column in July of 1975, with a long review in which I praised the tough spy fiction of Donald Hamilton for telling "the sordid truth." Well, lots of people have taken to not telling the truth so much recently, sordid and otherwise, and Donald Hamilton has joined John Le Carré and Len Deighton, at least to my taste, in trying to make his books do too much, especially too much politically. This is a farewell column, after a good run of nearly nine years in these pages, and it would have seemed somehow fitting if I could have signed off by praising Donald Hamilton's latest paperback original, *The Annihilators* (Fawcett, $3.50). But I can't, for I don't much like it, though this may be more of a change in me than in Matt Helm, and so my stint at pontificating can't come to a full circle.

Still, the column can nearly conclude in the round, for early on I was able to describe, and generally to praise, the Garland Publishing Company's reprint venture, *Fifty Classics of Crime Fiction, 1900-1950*, in which Jacques Barzun and Wendell Hertig Taylor selected one book each from the fifty writers of mysteries they most liked, and presented them to us in a $475 package, together with fresh introductions. I praised the selections and complained a little about the perfunctory nature of the introductions, but these fifty books seemed to me then, and still do, to comprise the ideal starter set for the reader of crime fiction. And now Garland, as well as Barzun and Taylor, have repeated themselves with *Crime Fiction, 1950-1975*. Except for the price, that is: these fifty will set you back $650.

Even so, the fifty books are worth it, for this selection seems even better to me than the first. Only one author is repeated—Michael Innes is in both series—and there are some very fine one-book writers represented, one of whom, Jean Scholey, I did not know of before. Scholey's *The Dead Past*, first published in 1961, is one of those stunning debuts that appears not to have stunned, for almost no one I have talked to seems to know if it, possibly because of its setting in relatively exotic Tanganyika, as Tanzania was then called. Barzun and Taylor show their originality—some might say their idiosyncracies—throughout their selections: Tony Hillerman is represented by his non-Navajo or Hopi mystery, *The Fly on the Wall*, an often eerie thriller set, I think, in Springfield, Illinois. Dick Francis is represented by *Dead Cert*, Stanley Ellin by his early book *The Key to Nicholas Street*, Amanda Cross by her first book, *In the Last Analysis*. These are strong choices and the series is the better for them, even though an effort to avoid duplicating other reprint series, and the unavailability of more recent books that remain in print, means that some authors may not have been represented by the book either they, or the critics, truly think their best.

If one is to be unhappy with this effort to bring order into the quarter century between 1950 and 1975, the chief source of unhappiness is the same as before: the editors' introductions are exceedingly brief. Each volume contains a standard introduction in which the first ten paragraphs are precisely the same, followed by two or three paragraphs tailored to the specific book. The act of scholarship, and real discernment, was in the selection, not in the execution.

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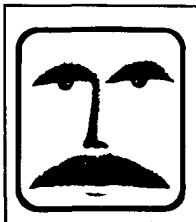

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Still, one must be grateful for the selection, for so much that is good is here: Ellis Peters in something other than her Brother Cadfael guise; John D. MacDonald with *Dead Low Tide*, not a Travis McGee book at all and one I've always thought (with *The Drowner*) MacDonald's best; Maurice Procter with *The Pub Crawler* or Fredric Brown with *The Deep End*, neither precisely typical of the authors; or K. C. Constantine, who has now been discovered, with his riveting *Man Who Liked to Look at Himself*; or A. H. Z. Carr, in one of my personal favorites, *Finding Maubee*, which introduces us to the black chief of police of the fictitious Caribbean island of St. Caro. This is a magnificent collection, and the right way to have the penultimate word at this waning moment.

Of course, if one is to take a last bow, and truly bring any ongoing discussion of mystery fiction full circle, one must end with the grand master of all time. It's good to report that one can do so without stretching matters, for there are three noteworthy books in the higher criticism. There is Trevor H. Hall's collection of appealing and scholarly essays, *Sherlock Holmes and His Creator* (St. Martin's, $5.95), first printed in 1977 and now reincarnated in a handsome new paperback edition. Essays on Holmes and Freud, on Holmes and Arséne Lupin, and the best of all on Holmes and T.S. Eliot, while serious, are also simply good fun. Then there is Owen Dudly Edwards's biographical study of Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Quest for Sherlock Holmes* (Mainstream Publishing, £12.50), which is a long, tightly packed, utterly intriguing series of arguments about Holmes and Doyle. This is the kind of book one wallows in for its rich detail (for example, Conan Doyle was baptized Ignatius Conan Doyle), for the side paths wisely followed by the author, and for the sense of reverence for the genre and yet seriousness for its purposes too, that suffuse the book. And one may then turn, appetite renewed, to the massive, and one presumes definitive, Soho Bibliography prepared by Richard Lancelyn Green and John Michael Gibson, *A Bibliography of A. Conan Doyle* (Oxford University Press), and think in wonder of how much there is yet to read. And *that* is the thought that truly brings us full circle.

ROBIN W. WINKS

Robin W. Winks's column on murder mysteries will be moving shortly to *The Boston Globe's* Sunday Magazine and its syndicate, where his reviews will appear in the last issue of each month.

"A hardheaded, intelligent account of Bertolt Brecht's life and works after he fled the Nazis, in 1933 . . . Mr. Cook offers vivid testimony from people who knew and worked with Brecht; his portrait of the Hollywood refugee colony is especially incisive."

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TRB, *from page 4*

The lack of concern or even curiosity about this state of affairs, when the basic facts about these chefs have been widely publicized, nicely illustrates the general confusion about what it means to be "friends" with a nation like China. President Reagan loses no opportunity to deplore the Soviet Union. He only recently conceded that perhaps the Soviets are not too repugnant to consider negotiating with. Meanwhile, the U.S.-China love feast goes on. Reagan and Prime Minister Zhao Ziyang staged the latest in what has become a traditional series of affectionate tableaux last month here in Washington. The show reopens in Peking in April.

The truth is that the government of the People's Republic is at least as morally offensive as the government of the Soviet Union. Over the past few months, according to a recent report by Michael Weisskopf of *The Washington Post*, more than one hundred thousand Chinese youths have been rounded up and dispatched, without trial, to remote hard-labor camps.

The only important difference between Russia and China is that China is no special threat to the United States. It suits our interests to have good relations with China, both for geopolitical reasons and because this version of détente really seems to be working in the prescribed manner: the patient is loosening up, reaching out, and even gaining an appetite for capitalism. Who knows where it may lead? Meanwhile, though, this is a business relationship. It isn't friendship, and it certainly doesn't require us to ignore the other fellow's bad odor to the point of letting him stink up a little corner of our own capital.

We have a quaint folk custom in this country, too. It's called freedom. Maybe—*maybe*—we can't extend this custom to foreign embassy personnel. We need diplomatic relations, even with tyrants. But we don't need Chinese food. International business and cultural dealings ought to begin with a clear understanding that when people are in the United States, wherever from and whatever for, they are free. And if certain governments find this intolerable, they can take their vinegars and spices and go home.

(Chuck Lane of THE NEW REPUBLIC *contributed research to this article.)*

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Beyond the Repertoire

ONE OF THE MANY arduous tasks of a publisher is giving speeches. Of course, I have a standard repertoire. For my supper and in the hope that someone out there in the audience will buy a subscription or take out an ad, I will discourse on "The State of American Liberalism" or "Can a Liberal Journal of Opinion Survive the Age of Reagan?" The answer to the latter is that the age of Reagan may in fact be one of the best things that's happened to this particular journal of opinion in its entire history. Reagan has been good to THE NEW REPUBLIC for two reasons: first, he scares our readers, and they turn to us for solace; and second, after three pragmatic Administrations, he's brought ideas back to Washington—mostly bad ideas, to be sure, but ideas that have just enough intellectual merit to make them worth fighting. So those of us on the business side of the magazine have mixed feelings about the November election. As Marty Peretz says, "With Reagan in office, I feel like a war profiteer." What I should be doing is preparing a speech called, "Can a Liberal Journal of Opinion Survive the Age of Mondale?" It would be a lot tougher.

OCCASIONALLY I AM asked to give speeches on subjects I know nothing about. When such requests include lures like four days of all-expenses-paid living in New Orleans, my favorite American city, I make the sacrifice. The subject in this case was Corporate Support of the Arts. The occasion was a symposium at the opening of a big, beautiful new hotel owned by the Inter-Continental chain, which itself is a major corporate supporter of the arts. In the New Orleans hotel alone, it spent a quarter of a million dollars on paintings and sculpture by local artists. Advocating corporate support of the arts sounded like an easy subject—like coming out for better education or streets without potholes. But the more I thought about it, the more skeptical I became. When corporations buy paintings and count the purchase as an expense on their income-tax returns, they are, in effect, receiving a subsidy from the federal government. You and I can't get a tax deduction when we buy a $300 lithograph to hang over the mantelpiece. So we have to ask the question: Is corporate philanthropy toward the arts a public good? Good enough to deny funds to the U.S. Treasury when it's running a $200 billion deficit?

MY CONCLUSION was a resounding "maybe." When a corporation supports the arts solely to enhance its own image—for public relations purposes—it is absolutely justified. That is the reason most corporations give grants to composers and sponsor traveling art exhibitions. It's a very effective form of advertising, especially in reaching elite customers, legislators, and regulators, in making them think warmer thoughts about such cold characters as oil companies and purveyors of cigarettes. This is the main reason that corporate spending on the arts leaped from $22 million in 1967 to $500 million in 1982. Like advertising, such support is a legitimate business expense. It will lead to higher sales and higher profits, and ultimately to more employment and more tax revenue. So corporate self-interest is the most valid (even though not the most seemly) reason to support the arts.

CORPORATIONS THEMSELVES, naturally, do not make the self-interest argument in public. They talk in high tones. Here, for example, is Winton Blount, the former Postmaster General who now heads a large Alabama-based construction company: "The old patrons and the church were not just dabblers in art; they were institutions which shaped and guided their societies. And so are we today. They recognized the essential role of art in determining the quality of the societies in which they lived. So must we today." In other words, corporations support the arts to make life richer. I'd like to buy that argument, but I'm suspicious. Do I really want Winton Blount's construction company shaping and guiding society any more than it already does? A few months ago, I heard Alan Abelson, editor of *Barron's*, talk about corporate social responsibility. Corporations, he said, aren't set up to be vehicles of social welfare, but to make profits—and they're not always successful even in achieving that limited objective. Social welfare should be left to charities and governments. (Although it's doubtful that Abelson would agree that corporate taxes should be raised and the proceeds sent to these institutions to dispose of.) The same argument can be made about the arts. And it sounds reasonable: corporations aren't very good at supporting the arts since they aren't set up to do so. They don't know much about the arts. They know about steel and oil and cigarettes.

THE IRONY is that corporate ignorance of the arts is what makes corporations the perfect patrons. They're scared to horn in, scared to throw their weight around—because they fear bad publicity, because they realize just how ignorant they are, and because there's no "they" there. The giant corporations that support the arts are truly faceless institutions. They don't impose their own taste because they're entities without taste. Tommaso Portinari could insist on having himself, his wife, and his three children painted into the *Adoration of the Shepherds*, the magnificent fifteenth-century triptych by Hugo van der Goes that hangs in the Uffizi, because, after all, he paid for it. Corporate sponsors would be scared to death to do such a thing. They're scrupulous in their impersonality. So, even if captains of industry themselves admire LeRoy Neiman watercolors, or paintings of schooners or ducks or elongated horses, we rarely see them subsidizing this sort of art. They wouldn't dare.

IT'S TRUE that the art they do subsidize is rarely in the vanguard. But I'm not sure that's so terrible. Corporate art, in this sense, is very similar to government-sponsored art. It's mostly non-representational, partly because it's harder for art to give offense if you can't tell precisely what it is. And it's mostly mainstream because it's responding to a democratic mandate. Why can't we be more directly democratic? Why not have government itself support the arts instead of subsidizing corporations to do the work? Tax deductions do obfuscate, but sometimes obfuscation can be a good thing. If the federal government were footing the cost directly, it's doubtful that the public would stand for spending another quarter billion on art this year. But when it comes off the tax bill of thousands of corporate patrons, we can't see it. And we're probably better off.

J.K.G.

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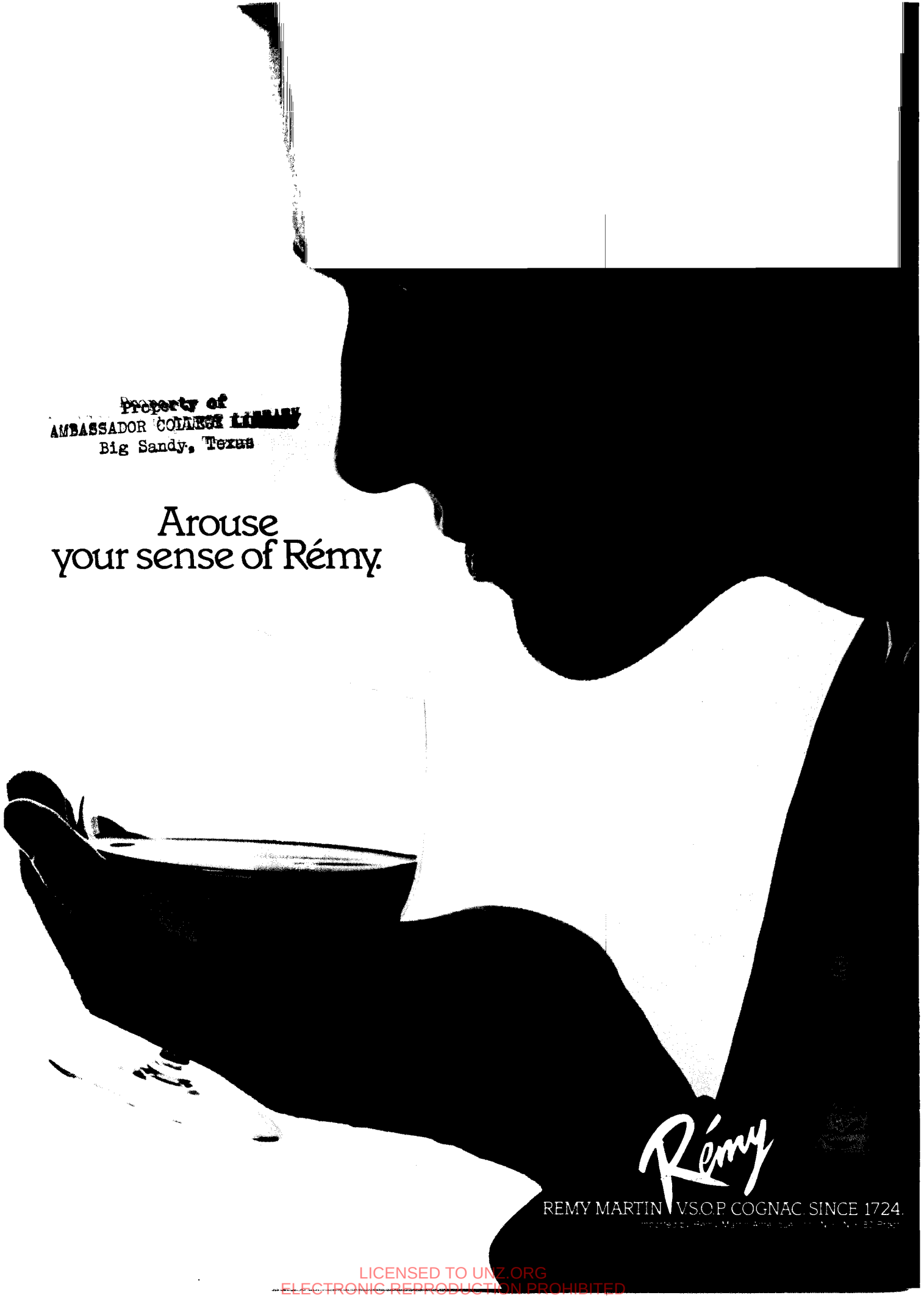

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